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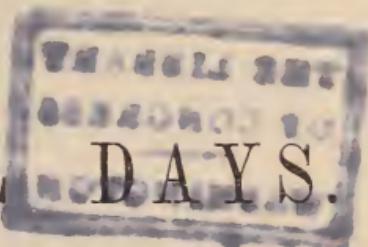
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MY
YOUTHFUL DAYS.



An Authentic Narrative.

BY REV. GEORGE COLES,

LATE ASSISTANT EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE AND
JOURNAL, AUTHOR OF LECTURES TO CHILDREN, ETC.

EDITED BY D. P. KIDDER.

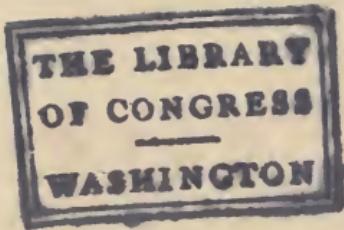
New-York:

PUBLISHED BY LANE & SCOTT,
FOR THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL
CHURCH, 200 MULBERRY-STREET.

JOSEPH LONGKING, PRINTER.

1852.

printed in Clark White



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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE present is deemed a fit occasion for a few remarks respecting the adaptation of works like the present to general usefulness, and specially to Sunday-school libraries.

Biography, when well written, is acknowledged to be a most interesting and useful department of reading. When the subject is possessed of a religious character, and has attained to useful and honorable positions in life, his memoirs become practically instructive, on numerous important subjects, to readers of all classes.

A common fault of biography has been the meagreness of its details respecting the early periods of life, during which character

is usually formed. Autobiography possesses great advantages here. Matters which would have escaped the notice of others remain vivid in the recollection of the person himself, who is able, also, to see their bearings upon succeeding events of his life.

Biography, in order to answer its legitimate ends, must be truthful. Herein is another element of value. Vast amounts of reading, prepared for the young, are chiefly the product of the imagination, and as such are either worthless or injurious. In biography we have the historic records of real life. The scenes portrayed actually occurred, and consequently are deserving of attention.

Considerations like these have induced the writer, in his editorial capacity, to encourage the production of autobiographies by persons now living and useful in the Church. Several such it has been his pleasure to put on the list of the Youth's Library,

in which they are widely circulated and read. With no less pleasure is the present volume added to the same list.

Its author is well known to the Church and the public as the former junior editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal.

By virtue of his office he sustained, for a series of years, the responsibility of editing and revising the books of the Sunday-school department. Under his editorship the Sunday School Advocate commenced its existence, and ever since, as well as in years preceding, the Rev. George Coles has been known as a devoted friend of the Sunday-school cause, a preacher to, and a writer for, the young. That an account of the youthful days of such a man, written by his own hand, will be interesting and instructive to thousands, cannot be for a moment doubted.

The author having been born and reared in England, he has been enabled to record his personal recollections of men and events,

concerning which it is ever interesting to acquire further and better information. His transparent and flowing style will entertain the reader at every step of his progress through the volume; and not only the young, but also persons of mature age, will find pleasure and instruction in its perusal.

With confidence, therefore, is the present volume offered to the public, as an additional testimony to the importance of early piety, and of persevering endeavors for self-improvement, and for usefulness in the world.

NEW-YORK, 1851.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

"A PREFACE," says a late learned editor, "is at all times rather a difficult article to write. If sprightly, it will be accused of levity ; if serious, it will incur the imputation of being dull. The writer of this would go many miles to see the author who could please every reader." Why it should be so, is, perhaps, more easily imagined than expressed.

The author of the present work has written a few books, edited a great many for the children's department, and, in the line of his profession, noticed a great many more ; and yet he is free to confess, that, when he sat down to write a preface to his own work, he knew not what to say. Hav-

ing said so much of himself in the body of the work, he was not at all disposed to praise or censure the work itself, and therefore may be excused, in this advertisement, from premonishing the reader of what he may expect to find in the perusal of its pages.

The book now presented to the reader was not designed for critics and learned men, but for young people ; and yet the author must acknowledge that in treating of the sober realities of life, in a style “familiar, but not coarse—elegant, but not ostentatious—always equable and exact, without apparent elaboration,” as Dr. Johnson expresses it, was no very easy task. If, however, the style, such as it is, shall please the reader, one object of the writer will certainly be accomplished ; and for the rest he is willing to trust an unerring Providence, and a generous and discerning public.

It will appear, in the following pages, that I have noted things as they affected

me, either at the time, or in the review of them. As to matters of fact, I have related them correctly, according to the best means of information which I possessed ; and as to meditations and reflections, and brief remarks on men and things, I have made them agreeably to my own views and feelings, rather than to the views and feelings of others. If I have censured or praised any person, or any thing, at any time, it was because I judged that person or thing to be worthy of censure or praise. To be insensible to defects is as bad as to be ignorant of existing excellence ; and to be so pleased with everything as to see nothing amiss, is as great an evil, nearly, as to be so ill-natured as never to be pleased with anything. Throughout my whole life I have endeavored to acknowledge excellence wherever I discovered it, and to discountenance evil wherever I met with it.

My original design, in writing memoirs of myself, was my own gratification, and

my motive for continuing the practice was my own improvement; and if I have any motive for making my records public, it is the innocent entertainment of others. I have always enjoyed life, notwithstanding the sufferings attending it; have always found means to alleviate suffering and increase enjoyment; have always considered this mortal existence too short, by far, for the acquisition of all that useful knowledge which is desirable, and for the accomplishment of works that are in themselves laudable and useful; and I therefore consider it my duty to impart all the knowledge I possess, that may be of any use to others, and to leave behind me some few hints for the benefit of those who may come after me.

G. COLES.

PEEKSKILL, N. Y.,
June 14, 1851.

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MY YOUTHFUL DAYS.

CHAPTER I.

MY NATIVE PLACE.

I WAS born in the parish of Stewkley, in the county of Buckingham, England, on Thursday, June 2d, 1791. My ancestors were Episcopalians, and strict observers of the outward forms of the Established Church; consequently they took care to inform me that I was born on Holy Thursday, which, according to the calendar, is the day to be observed in commemoration of the ascension of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The three days preceding are called *Rogation* days, "from the extraordinary prayers and supplications which, with fasting, were at this time offered by devout Christians." I make no particular account of these things any further than that they have often re-

minded me, since I was called to the work of the ministry, that I ought to be a man of prayer, and holy in all manner of conversation.

It might, perhaps, savor of national pride to say, that I regard it as a peculiar favor, and am truly thankful that it pleased Almighty God, the wise disposer of all human events, that I should receive my being and birth, and the first rudiments of my education, in *Great Britain*; for though I by no means approve of the crimes of which some of my countrymen have been guilty, yet I cannot refuse my homage to that little island, which for a thousand generations has been, and for a thousand reasons is, “the glory of all lands.” England is rich in commerce, and in agriculture unparalleled; in manufactures, and in useful discoveries, she surpasses most nations on earth; in ancient, modern, and sacred literature she is pre-eminent; and in the arts and sciences, with slight exceptions, unrivaled. As a nation she is magnanimous in war, and in peace generous to a fault. She is wise in politics, in trade honorable; in civil jurisprudence pure and uncorrupt;

in religion she may be considered as the safeguard of Europe; and in works of charity the good Samaritan to the whole world.

This is not the place to institute a comparison between the mother and her daughter—between that country and this—but I hope I may say, without offense, if the daughter be wise, the mother cannot be very foolish; if the daughter be beautiful, the mother must, at least, have been handsome in her day. Her daughter, as is too often the case with other daughters, may forget her former obligations—may, perhaps, despise her mother because she is old, and call her weak, and foolish, and homely, because she does not follow her fashions—but she ought not to forget that, situated as she is, the mother must either rule or be ruled—she must be the mistress or the slave of all Europe. I acknowledge that many of her rulers have been tyrants, that some of them have been persecutors of the most pious of their subjects, that her political and ecclesiastical history have been marked with crimes of the deepest dye; but I have observed, with emotions of gra-

titude, that in her worst times, as it was with ancient Israel, there was, in the midst of her, "a remnant, according to the election of grace." Her religious influence, in the operations of the Bible Society, and in the good work of missions, is felt in every quarter of the globe; and with all my admiration of this country, which is not small, I seldom look upon a piece of English manufacture—from the blessed Bible, in which I daily read, to the steel pen with which I write—but I advert, with solemn gratitude, to that country from which so many of the elegancies and comforts of domestic life flow. But it is chiefly on a religious account that I venerate the land of my birth. Had these United States been settled and peopled by emigrants from any other country than that of the Pilgrim Fathers, they would not have been what they now are—free and independent States—one great and growing Republic! The Protestant religion, the English Bible, and the elements of British law and literature, are the glory and the bulwarks of this nation, and my prayer is that she may

“stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made her free.”

Stewkley, the place of my birth, is about twelve miles south-east of Buckingham, fifty north of London, and about midway between Oxford and Cambridge. The parish church, which is a venerable structure, and is said to have been built in the time of the Normans, stands nearly in the centre of the town, and about the middle of the village. From the top of the tower is one of the finest views in that part of the country, bounded on the south by the Chiltern hills, on the north by Whaddon Chase—a forest about five miles in length, and one in breadth—on the east by three towns, called Great Brickhill, Little Brickhill, and Bow Brickhill, and by a ridge of hills twelve miles to the west. Within this area lie nineteen or twenty towns and villages, the chief of which is Leighton Buzzard, which is graced with a lofty church spire. All the other places are ornamented with parish churches, built of stone, and furnished with bells. In some of the towns, also, might be seen a Methodist chapel; but when I was born

such accommodations were, in that county, very few and far between. Now they are to be found in almost every village.

The fields of Stewkley, when I was a boy, were *uninclosed*,—that is, not laid out in compact farms, and fenced as they now are. In the cultivation of their fields the farmers divided them into three sections—one for wheat and rye; another for barley, oats, peas, beans, and turnips; and the other was always kept fallow. By this means every acre of ploughed land had rest once in three years, during which time it was well manured. This process rendered the soil extremely fertile, and the crops, in general, were very abundant. The fields being uninclosed, the lands were laid out in ridges, and divided by furrows, and each owner's tract or section was separated from his neighbor's by a border, or designated by a land-mark. It will be recollected that the words "*fallow, field, furrow, ridge, border, and land-mark,*" are Scriptural; but I never saw in any other part of the world so perfect an illustration of them as in the parish where I was born. The whole township

was well supplied with the purest water, at a trifling depth below the surface, though there was not a single stream in it large enough to turn a mill of any considerable size. The meadows and small lots lay near the village, and the pastures lay by the small brooks in the open fields, between the cultivated lands. The sheep, and larger cattle, were turned into the pastures about the 23d of May, and were kept from injuring the grain by cowherds and shepherds. The time of sheep-washing and shearing was one of great merriment and feasting; and the season of hay-making, which generally occupied the month of June and part of July, when the days are from sixteen to seventeen hours long, was one of pleasant toil and good cheer. The “appointed weeks of harvest” were also a very busy season, and when the weather was fine, a very joyous one, both for the farmer and his men. In the time of harvest the poor people were allowed to glean in the fields, after the manner of Ruth in the field of Boaz; only they must not go among the reapers, but wait until the wheat was bound up in

sheaves, and set up in shocks; and they must be careful to "keep their hands from picking and stealing," as the catechism says, while they were allowed to go among the shocks and gather up the precious grain, that fell from the hand of the reaper, as he thrust in the sickle, and filled his hand with the straight and tall, or tangled wheat and rye.

When I was between seven and ten years of age, being exceedingly fond of out-door exercise, there being no school in the village during the summer season, my parents allowed me the pleasure of going into the fields, with others, and of "gathering up the golden grain" in the way that was common in those days.

Some families would send three or four gleaners into the field, who, if they were industrious, would pick up of loose grain, an ear at a time, sufficient, when beaten out, and ground into flour, and made into bread, to supply the wants of a small family for some months. Early in the morning, while the dew was on the grass, and the skylark, the goldfinch, the cuckoo, and others of the

feathered tribes, were chanting their melodious song, have I joined the jolly groups of gleaners plodding their cheerful way to the harvest field; and often have I toiled with them all the long forenoon, till we were overcome with heat and hunger, and reminded by the altitude of the sun, or by the quantity which we had gathered, that it was time to rest a little. We would then regale ourselves, under some shady tree, or hawthorn hedge, if there happened to be one near by, eat our homely fare, drink from the pure stream, or bubbling spring, a draught of nature's purest beverage, rest ourselves awhile, and then return to our pleasing toil, and so continue until the shades of evening reminded us that it was time to go home. Then, in the cool of the day, while the song of the thrush and of the blackbird filled the air with sweetest melody, or the harvest moon had risen, and the nightingale had begun to warble her wildest notes, with our shoulders, or rather our heads, heavily laden—for we always carried our burden on our heads—we would wend our homeward way, with jocund step,

and deposit in a room appropriated to receive it, the product of our day's labor. O happy villagers! They knew but little of the cares of life, less of the perplexities of trade, still less of the din of politics, and nothing of the snares and corruptions of large cities and seaport towns. All their study seemed to be to gain an honest livelihood, and provide for themselves and their children the necessaries of life. It was of such persons, and such scenes as these, that the humble bard of Shefford sung in the following simple strains:—

“A glorious sight, if glory dwells below,
Where heaven's munificence makes all the show;
Where every cottage from the plenteous store
Receives a burden nightly at its door;
And ere sweet summer bids its long adieu,
And winds blow keen where blossoms lately grew,
The bustling day and jovial night must come,
The long-accustomed feast of *Harvest Home.*”

Bloomfield's Farmer's Boy.

The English poets, from time immemorial, have sung the beauties of nature, as displayed in the flower-garden and the field throughout the various seasons of the year; and it is well that they have, for surely

nothing can exceed the loveliness of those landscape beauties and rural scenes for which that favored isle is confessedly pre-eminent. In the flower-garden the snow-drop, the daffodil, the crocus, the polyanthus, the wall-flower, the stock-jilly, the pink, the carnation, and many others of Flora's tribe, seem to vie with each other for beauty and fragrance ; and in the fields and meadows, the daisy, the violet, the cow-slip, and the primrose, appear to strive to outdo each other in regaling the senses of the traveler and the beholder. The glory of the field, the loveliness of the garden, the grandeur of the palace, the neatness of the cottage, the music of the feathered tribes, and a thousand other things equally pleasing to the eye and ear, such as fences all along the public roads for miles, made of the prickly hawthorn, and all alive with beauty, fragrance, and song—these, when taken together, constitute an assemblage of delights too great to be described, too rich to be forgotten ; and heightened by the innocence of childhood, and the buoyancy of youth, as they then were, they almost make me

wish to live that period of my life over again. When I think of those scenes, and of that land in which they occurred, I always "languish and sigh to be there." If this be weakness, may the Lord pity it; if it be sin, may he forgive it; and if it be a virtue, may he reward it.*

* "The taste of the English in the cultivation of the land, and in what is termed landscape gardening, is unrivaled. Nothing can be more imposing than their park scenery. But what most delights me is the creative talent with which the English decorate the unostentatious abodes of middle life. The rudest habitation, the most unpromising and scanty portion of land in the hands of an Englishman of taste, becomes a little paradise. The residence of people of fortune and refinement in the country has diffused a degree of taste and elegance in rural economy, that descends to the lowest class. The very laborer, with his thatched cottage, and narrow slip of ground, attends to their embellishment. The trim hedge, the grass-plat before the door, the little flower-bed, bordered with snug box, the woodbine trained up against the wall, and hanging its blossoms about the lattice, the pot of flowers in the window, the holly, providentially planted about the house to cheat winter of its dreariness, and throw in a gleam of summer to cheer the fireside—all these bespeak the influence of taste, flowing down from the high sources, and pervading the lowest level of the public mind. If ever lover, as

I was the youngest of my father's sons, and the ninth in regular succession ; and though the love of my parents had been divided and subdivided so many times,

poets sing, delights to visit a cottage, it must be the cottage of an English peasant.

"The proneness to rural life among the higher classes has had a salutary effect upon the national character. English gentlemen, instead of the softness and effeminacy which characterize the men of rank in some countries, exhibit a robustness of frame, and freshness of complexion, which I am inclined to attribute to their living so much in the open air, and pursuing so eagerly the invigorating recreations of the country.

"The effect of this devotion of elegant minds to rural occupations has been wonderful on the face of the country. A great part of the island is level, and would be monotonous, were it not for the charms of culture ; but it is studded and gemmed, as it were, with castles and palaces, and embroidered with parks and gardens. It does not abound in grand and sublime prospects, but rather in little home-scenes of rural repose and sheltered quiet. Every antique farm-house and moss-grown cottage is a picture ; and as the roads are continually winding, and the view shut in by groves and hedges, the eye is delighted by a continual succession of small landscapes of captivating loveliness.

"The great charm, however, of English scenery, is the moral feeling that seems to pervade it. It is

yet there was still left enough for all, and enough for each, certainly enough to enable them to take good care of me. The oldest and youngest of our numerous family were girls, but Providence saw fit to leave me, and five older brothers, to grapple with the ills of life, without the softening influence of a sister's love, or the charms of female manners, except those of our mother and cousins, to give polish to our rusticity, or associated in the mind with ideas of order, of quiet, of calm and settled principles of hoary usage, and reverend custom.

"It is a pleasing sight on a Sunday morning, when the bells are sending their sober melody across the quiet fields, to behold the peasantry in their best finery, with ruddy faces and modest cheerfulness, thronging tranquilly along the green lanes to church; and it is also pleasing to see them in the evenings, gathering about their cottage doors, and appearing to exult in the humble comforts and embellishments which their own hands have spread around them. It is this sweet home feeling, this settled repose of affection in the domestic scene, that is, after all, the parent of the steadiest virtues and purest enjoyments.

"' O friendly to the best pursuits of man,
Friendly to thought, to virtue, and to peace,
Domestic life in rural pleasures pass'd.'"

Washington Irving's Rural Life in England.

even the tinge of chivalry to our deeds of noble daring. The want of sisters was always a source of grief to me.

Fate, or rather Providence, decreed that I should be born, as I have stated, on the second day in the first of the summer months, when all nature is in her gayest attire. My birth-day, of course, always occurred when the fields were clothed with an emerald verdure, and the numerous flowers in the gardens of both rich and poor filled the air with the sweetest odors, and the fruit-trees were thickly loaded with ripening and delicious fruit. The gooseberry is a fruit held in high estimation in England. There it grows to perfection, and is found in almost every poor man's garden. My father had several kinds in his, and my good mother, as regularly as my birth-day returned, took care to furnish the table with plenty of green peas and a gooseberry pudding. It was probably owing to these circumstances that I became passionately fond of summer scenes, and, for a long time, had a dread of, and dislike to, the cold and dreariness of winter.

The same unerring Providence which ordained the time of my birth “fixed the bounds of my habitation,” and cast my lot among the inhabitants of a country village, in one of the finest portions of the habitable globe, and under the auspices of one of the best governments then existing. It certainly was not a matter of choice with me when, and where, and of whom I should be born; but it is a matter of thankfulness that all these things happened as they did.

My father was a sober and industrious mechanic, and taught four of his sprightly sons the same craft which he had learned of his forefathers, which was that of a wheelwright, millwright, wagon-maker, and carpenter, all joined in one. It was never intended that I should work at my father’s trade; but as I was often in the shop, waiting on my father and brothers, doing errands for them, and seeing them work, until I was fifteen years of age, I acquired considerable knowledge of the use of tools, which has often been a source of pleasure, and sometimes of profit to me since that period.

My father’s estate, though small, was

very pleasantly situated near the middle of the village, in sight of the old Episcopal church, and but a few rods from the spot where now stands an elegant Methodist chapel. It was on the east side of a road running north and south, and consisted of a lot of ground, on which stood a two-story dwelling-house, a workshop, a carriage-house, and wood-barn, and several trees. In front of the house, and facing the west, were a court-yard and beautiful flower-garden ; and on the south side of the workshop stood several houses of industry, or habitations for bees. These industrious little insects were a source of pleasure and profit to the family. Early in the season, or as soon as the flowers began to bloom, one might hear, from within the hive, the delightful hum of a busy population ; and as soon as the crocus, the polyanthus, and others of the floral tribe, began to open their petals to the morning sun, the bees might be seen regaling themselves among the fragrant delights of our little garden. My oldest brother was considered proprietor of that little paradise, and I, being the

youngest of the family, was employed, morning and evening, as a sort of journeyman gardener, to take care of the same.

In the door-yard was an excellent well of water, and near it stood an old apple-tree, which bore a very enviable species of fruit, which was sometimes a source of temptation to mischievous boys passing that way. Between the two front windows of our ancient family dwelling grew a sweet-smelling woodbine, or honeysuckle, whose thrifty branches reached almost to the eaves of the house. At the south-west corner grew a choice grape-vine, which my father cultivated, and pruned, with great care. It was fastened to the sides of the house facing the south and west, and bore some of the most delicious white grapes I ever tasted in my life, and it often reminded me of the words of Christ, “I am the vine, ye are the branches.” John xv, 1. At the south end of the house grew two famous plum-trees, which also yielded the best kind of fruit. At the south-east corner of the lot stood a thrifty willow, from whose young branches I used to manufacture whistles, without

paying too dear for them, for the wood cost me nothing, and the trouble of making them was not great. On the northern boundary-line grew a venerable elm, the lofty and wide-spread branches of which might be seen at the distance of five or six miles. If we had only had one lofty pine, the picture would have been complete.

Our kitchen garden was back of the house, and was surrounded with a strong fence of hawthorn, which was trimmed every year, and grew so thick that one might lay a board on the top of it, and walk on it from end to end. In the spring of the year it put forth leaves and blossoms, and young shoots, and was very odoriferous withal. The little birds used to build their nests within its shady retreat, out of the way of rude boys, who, though prone to rob the birds of their eggs, would seldom adventure their hands within its thorny recesses. In our kitchen-garden stood two apple-trees, one of which bore two kinds of fruit, the other one, and both excellent in their kind. Beside the apple-trees, there were two kinds of plums, three of gooseberries, three of

currants, two of nuts, and all of the best kind. My brother Daniel was the gardener in this department, and occasionally hired me as an assistant. He was an excellent economist, and by his good management kept the family well supplied with a great variety of vegetables, early and late, pure and good. I was a downright enemy to weeds and rubbish of all kinds, and as great a lover of vegetables, fruits, and flowers. Early and late would I do my part in cultivating the one kind, and as diligently would seek to destroy and exterminate the other.

The ploughed lands in Stewkley fields were extremely fertile, and the meadows surprisingly luxuriant. Not a stump, nor a stone, was to be seen in the pastures, nor a brier nor bramble allowed to grow in the meadows. The crops of hay and grain did most amply repay the tiller's toil, and in quantity as well as quality were such as I have seldom seen elsewhere. The farmers were a plain, simple, honest race of men, and the mechanics and laborers were much like them. Of professional men, such as

lawyers and doctors, we had none in the village. The almost uninterrupted health of the people did not require the skill of a physician, or the aid of medicine, except occasionally, and the general tranquillity of the place left but little room, and seldom gave occasion for the exercise of forensic learning. Our country dames and damsels, (the term *lady* being correlative to that of lord, was not in use among us, except in reference to the titled nobility,) though by no means angels, either in their own opinion or that of others, were as handsome, as virtuous, and as kind, as any in the realm. Indeed, of the whole community, men, women, and children, it might be said—

“Far from the madd’ning crowd’s ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learn’d to stray ;
Along the cool sequester’d vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.”

O, it is delightful to look back on the days of childhood, when the heart was susceptible of every tender impression, and feelingly alive to every affection ; when my mother’s image was to me the dearest on earth, and her voice of approbation, when

she spoke well of my boyish deeds, was sweeter to my ear than the warblings of the nightingale; when a small “reward of merit” from my father’s hand, or a kind word from an elder brother, or a small present from a neighbor, was to me of more value, and more highly prized, than a much larger donation in after years. Often, on the bed of sickness, when sleep has departed from my eyes, as though my mind had lost its hold on the passing events of the present time, and had sprung back to the scenes of my childhood, have I reviewed, and reviewed again, the pleasures of those bygone days; and the remembrance of them has been more reviving to my fainting spirit, than the fragrance of the sweetest flower to the languishing body, when sinking beneath the weight of disease. At such seasons, when the images of departed friends would seem to stand before the eye of my mind, the words of the poet would come forcibly to my recollection :—

“ Can memory forget the hours
That I have spent with you?
As soon might fragrance quit the flowers,
Or flowers refuse the dew !

“ As soon might Sol withhold his rays,
Or rivers cease to flow,
As I should e'er forget the days
That I have spent with you !

“ As soon might stars refuse to shine,
Or the moon her light to impart ;
For the fond affections now entwine
Around my pensive heart.

“ As soon might beauty leave the flowers
Or the earth refuse the dew,
As I should e'er forget the hours
That I have spent with you !”

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH SERVICE IN ENGLAND.

As there was no other Church in the village in which I was born, but the one established by law, my ancestors, for many generations, were members of that Church; and as my maternal uncle was a minister of that ancient and respected order, and as I knew no other way of worshiping God, it is not to be wondered at if I, like many others, entertained prejudices and predilections in favor of the Episcopal form. Being accustomed, from my earliest infancy, to listen to "the sound of the church-going bell," to put on my best clothes, and to go to church with my parents on a Sunday morning, I very early indulged a feeling of respect, and even reverence, for all that pertained to the Church service. And this I may say without fear of contradiction, though I never heard an extemporaneous prayer or sermon within those consecrated walls, or knew of the conversion of a soul from a course of sin to a life of holiness, within the bounds

of the congregation, I never saw anything disorderly or irreverent in the time of service, in the old Episcopal church in which I was baptized. When the appointed hour arrived, the minister, clad in canonical vestments, came in. Every eye was fixed on him as he ascended the sacred desk ; the greatest silence prevailed in the congregation ; every ear was attentive to the first words that fell from his lips, and every tongue was ready to respond, at the proper time, to the prayers which he offered. The old parish clerk had a most melodious and powerful voice, and was always sure to let every one hear him say, when it came to his turn to repeat it, “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,” or the other part of the sentence, “As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.” The aged members, also, were as zealous to pronounce with an audible voice those words in the excellent Litany, at the end of every petition, “Good Lord, deliver us ;” while the young people, who wished to be thought respectable citizens, and good Christians, were always

careful to know where to find the place in the Prayer-book for the "Collect," the "Epistle," or the "Gospel" for the day. Indeed, it was often a matter of conversation in our family, on Sunday morning, before we went to Church, what day it was, whether Advent, or Epiphany, or Midlent, or Trinity, for we thought it a shame not to know what service was required of us on any and every day throughout the year. If it were Midlent Sunday, the plum-pudding was about as certain as the day, unless mother forgot it, which was seldom the case. If it were Shrovetide, we boys were as sure to have *cakes* on *Tuesday*, as the Dutch people in this country are to have plenty of boiled eggs on Easter day. But the *reason* of all this is so buried in the rubbish of antiquity, that I never in my life knew where to find it.

Psalm-singing was an important part of the service in the Episcopal Church, and as nearly all in my father's family were performers, either vocal or instrumental, in that part of public worship, we were all anxious to be ready to render assistance in

the time of need. My father, in his early days, had played the oboe, my eldest brother the clarionet, another the flute, and another the basoon, while it fell to my lot, having a good *treble* voice, to study and practice that part of sacred harmony which suited my juvenile powers. The good old clerk was always careful to say, at the beginning, "Let us sing to the praise and the glory of God," while the choir, on the other hand, after service, if they did well, were as careful to take the praise to themselves. This, to a mind purely spiritual, may seem a shocking desecration of the most sublime, most angelic part of divine worship; but who can tell what allowance the Good Being will make for such a poor, imperfect creature as sinful man?

A modern *connoisseur*, if he could hear the powerful harmony of a country choir, might be disposed to *criticise*, and justly, too, the rude strains of uncultivated genius. But after all that might be said on the subject, there is a kind of *consistency* belonging to the whole affair, which might be sought for in vain in more refined and polished cir-

cles; the taste of the audience, the quaintness of the poetry, the simplicity of the melody, the plainness of the harmony, at the time referred to, were all in accordance with the rusticity of the performers. I remember well an anthem taken from the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, in which there was a *counter solo*, set to these words, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up; be not afraid," in which the music was made to correspond with the words, being of such a character that very few could "reach the highest notes." The old clerk, however, whose voice was as well exercised in singing as it was in reading prayers, was not frightened at such a passage, but with the aid of my brother's clarionet, could effectually accomplish his task, to the admiration of all the congregation.

There was another part of the religious services in the Episcopal Church which was equally interesting, and perhaps more profitable, to little boys and girls: it was "saying the catechism." When Easter Sunday came,

and the minister called us from our seats to "come and say the catechism," we all left our pews, marched into the broad aisle in front of the desk, with heads up, and hands behind us, all prepared to give the proper answers, in an audible voice, so as to be heard by the minister and all the congregation. The good boys and girls always got a kind word, and sometimes a few pennies from the minister, or from some officer in the Church, which encouraged them to do their best on such occasions. The lessons previously committed to memory, and thus repeated, were of singular use to me in after life, particularly that part in answer to the question—

"What dost thou chiefly learn by these commandments?"

"*Answer.* I learn two things: my duty toward God, and my duty toward my neighbor."

"*Question.* What is thy duty toward God?"

"*Answer.* My duty toward God is to believe in him; to fear him, and to love him with all my heart, with all my mind, with

all my soul, and with all my strength ; to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honor his holy name, and his word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life."

"*Question.* What is thy duty toward thy neighbor?"

"*Answer.* My duty toward my neighbor is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me ; to love, honor, and succor my father and mother; to honor the king, (or, *chief magistrate,*) and all that are put in authority under him ; to submit myself to all my governors, teachers, pastors, and masters ; to hurt nobody by word or deed ; to be true and just in all my dealings ; to bear no malice or hatred in my heart ; to *keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from lying and slandering* ; to keep my body in temperance, soberness, and chastity ; not to covet or desire other men's goods ; but to learn and labor truly to get my own living, and *to do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me.*"

These lessons may have lost their effect upon thousands, but I do know that they were not wholly lost on me.

Funerals, also, in the Episcopal Church, were attended with becoming solemnity. The great bell was tolled at the proper hour, and when the procession arrived at the church-yard, the minister, clad in a white surplice of pure lawn, met the corpse, borne on men's shoulders, and the mourners following after, with these comfortable words upon his lips, "I am the resurrection and the life," &c. The procession then entered the church, and when the company were seated in their pews, the thirty-ninth or ninetieth Psalm, and part of the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, with suitable prayers, were read with proper solemnity; and frequently a psalm or anthem was sung, out of respect to the memory of the deceased; while at the grave the appointed service was always read, for rich or poor, young or old, with the same solemnity and decorum. The last service of this kind that I ever attended, in my native village, was the funeral of my

revered father. As he had “lived in all good conscience” among his neighbors ; been a regular attendant at church all his days, but never persecuted his children or his neighbors for leaving the Church and becoming Methodists ; had supported a numerous family with small means and great respectability ; and as the weather was unusually fine for the season, his funeral was more numerously attended than that of any other person, belonging to the village, I ever saw. His remains were carried from his dwelling to the church, nearly half a mile, by six of his neighbors ; the pall was borne by six of the most respectable farmers in the place ; and a long train of relatives and friends followed him to the tomb. The singers honored him with that well-known psalm, “ Since our good friend is gone to rest within the silent grave,” &c., which, though the poetry is not in the best style, and the music was but indifferent, was intended as a mark of respect by the choir, and so regarded by the family of the deceased.

The effect of the Church service upon my

youthful mind was most salutary and abiding. The prayers, as every one acquainted with the ritual of the English Church knows, are suited “to all sorts and conditions of men.” They are expressed in plain, dignified, and orthodox terms, and they took deep hold of my feelings: they were the earliest, and, perhaps, the most powerful means of fortifying my mind against the errors of Socinianism and infidelity on the one hand, and Pelagianism and Antinomianism on the other. The psalms and lessons from the Old and New Testament, being read every Sabbath, made me familiar with the sacred volume; while the sermons, if not strictly evangelical as to matters of faith and experience, were at least practically good, and of a tendency calculated to promote charity and good works. Had the venerable Church of England retained the spirit and practice of apostolical piety, as well as the “true faith;” had she retained the “power of godliness,” as well as the form thereof, and exercised a stricter discipline over her delinquent members, Puritanism, and Qua-

kerism, and Methodism, in name at least, had never been known in that country; but as “the body without the spirit is dead,” so that Church, being in many parishes destitute of an evangelical ministry, and burdened with lifeless members, was dead also. It was necessary, therefore, that some one called and qualified by God, and made a minister, “not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life,” should step in, between the living and the dead, that the plague of immorality might be stayed, and that the whole nation might not perish.

CHAPTER III.

COURSE OF READING.

NEWSPAPERS, circulating libraries, and Sunday-school books had not found their way into country villages at the time when I was born. Our minister did not live in the parish, and the schoolmaster and high-constable were almost the only persons that ever saw the Weekly Gazette or the Daily Journal. The only books I ever saw in school, if my recollection serves me, were the Bible, a spelling-book, and a geography. The Bible, of course, was our only reading book. The spelling-book was but little used, and the geography not at all.

I believe my mother taught me my letters. At any rate, I well remember she furnished me with a *horn-book*, and made me take it with me, when I went to school to my grandmother. It was not such a one as I have since read of in Johnson's great dictionary, in the words of the poet:—

"To master John the English maid
A *horn-book* gives of ginger-bread;
And that the child may learn the better,
As he can learn, he eats the letter."—*Prior.*

No; mine was a real *horn-book*, made of a thin piece of wood, with printed letters pasted on it, and covered with a piece of transparent horn, through which the letters might be seen. A book of this kind would last, with care, many years.

Our family library must have been very small when I first began to read, and but for the death of my uncle, who died when I was seven years of age, I might have been a long time destitute of what some are pleased to call "book learning." My mother's brother, as before stated, was a minister of the Established Church. He was for some time vicar of Renhold, in the county of Bedford, the place now occupied by the Rev. Mr. Grimshawe, author of the Life of the poet Cowper. In that church-yard my uncle lies buried, and from the epitaph on his tombstone, which was drawn up by one who knew him well, I should judge that he was a clergyman of very rare qualities, to whom the glowing lines of

Goldsmith would not have been altogether inapplicable. Of this fact, however, others may be better able to judge than myself. I will therefore give both, and the reader may take which suits him best:—

“ A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year.
Remote from towns he ran a godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wish'd to change his place.
Unskillful he to fawn, or seek for power
By doctrines suited to the varying hour :
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.

* * * * *

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And ev'n his failings lean'd to virtue's side ;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd, and wept, he pray'd, and felt for all.
And as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt his new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds and led the way.”

THE EPITAPH ON MY UNCLE'S TOMB-STONE.

“ His was a character of intrinsic and quiet excellence. As a son, eminently filial ; as a friend, sincere ; courteous, without the usual forms of politeness ; pious, without affectation ; and cheerfully resigned under long sickness. He adorned the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ, whom he invariably preached, and in whom alone he trusted for salvation and glory. ‘ Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile ! ’ ”

The late Rev. John Berridge, vicar of Everton, the facetious author of “The Christian World Unmasked,” was the particular friend of my uncle; and so was the late Rev. Thomas Robinson, vicar of St. Mary’s, Leicester, author of four volumes of Scripture Characters. Mr. Robinson made my uncle a present of his works, which, with several other volumes, after my uncle’s death, fell into my father’s family.

The acquisition of an evangelical clergyman’s library, though small, was of singular use to me, and on my youthful mind exerted a most salutary influence. Had my uncle been an unconverted man—had his library been that of a gay and frivolous sportsman, or novelist—I might have contracted a love for the reading of “light trash,” instead of a reverence for the Holy Scriptures. O how often have I thought of this, and in view of my love of sacred truth, had occasion to say, “Not unto me, not unto me, but unto Thy name, O Lord, be the glory.”

The first book in my uncle’s library that attracted my attention was “Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress.” It was an octavo volume,

beautifully printed, neatly bound, and ornamented with some “splendid copperplate engravings.” The plates attracted my eye, and the story of poor Pilgrim affected my heart. At first I thought the story was literally true; afterwards I understood it to be an allegory; and since then I have found a great part of it to be true in my own experience, particularly that part of it which describes the burden of sin, and the power of the cross—for I had scarcely attained my thirteenth year, before I could with Christian sing—

“ Blest cross, blest sepulchre, blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me.”

The next books that won my fixed attention were three ponderous folios, commonly called “Fox’s Books of Martyrs.” The plates in this work were numerous, and well executed, and made such a striking impression upon my mind as will never be eradicated. These were the books that, more than all others, tended to excite in me an everlasting disgust at overgrown power, spiritual intolerance, and ecclesiastical domination. But, thank God, those

times are past, and literature, and Protestantism, free discussion, and an unquenchable thirst for liberty, have united their salutiferous streams, and are rolling on to the healing of the nations.

Barclay's Dictionary was another book which afforded me constant delight, and abundance of instruction. It was a very thick octavo volume, and to me, at least, answered the purpose of an encyclopedia. But the volume which, at that time, acquired the highest authority and greatest celebrity in our little circle, was "Burkitt's Notes" on the New Testament. Nothing of the kind had ever made its appearance in our family before, and without hesitation Burkitt, as a commentator, soon acquired the reputation of an oracle. If the preacher took his text from the New Testament, Burkitt was appealed to, to see if he expounded it right; and whether the preacher gave the text a Calvinistic or an Arminian interpretation, it mattered not, if he and Burkitt agreed. Nor was this so much to be wondered at, since Burkitt himself sometimes leaned to the Arminian side of

the question, and sometimes, perhaps, a little too much the other way.

“Robinson’s Scripture Characters,” also, were read with great attention, and furnished me with a much better view of the biographies of the Bible than I ever had before. These full-length portraits of the fathers of the human race gave me a great liking to sacred biography—a subject which I prefer to many others, even to this day.

We had not as yet read any books in defense of Methodism; but no sooner had my eldest brother been brought under conviction for sin, which was by means of a sermon preached at Little Harwood, by an Episcopal minister, from the words of the prophet Hosea, ix, 5, “What will ye do in the solemn day?” than the Homilies of the Church of England, Baxter’s Call to the Unconverted, Alleine’s Alarm, Doddridge on Regeneration, Russell’s Seven Sermons, Bunyan’s Visions of Heaven and Hell, and other godly books, found their way into the family; and when my brother had experienced religion, the Methodist Magazines, Nelson’s Journal, Coke and Moore’s Life of

Wesley, and Benson's Life of Fletcher, were added to the library. Several of these books I read with the same avidity, almost, as the former; for although the narratives of the prophets and apostles had the sanction of inspiration to recommend them, and had the first claim to my belief and respect, yet I always regarded the experience of Christians as admirably calculated to illustrate the doctrines of the Bible, the parables of our Lord, and the writings of the apostles, and consequently well adapted to the building up of believers on their most holy faith.

Perhaps it was this course of reading in my early days that gave me such a decided preference for *facts* instead of *fiction*. There is, doubtless, much of fiction in poetry, but then it is fiction of a certain kind, for which even a child can make every allowance. Every child knows that trees do not speak, nor "birds confabulate," unless it be "in fable." I admire the poetical genius of such men as Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton. The scholar that reads Milton improves his classic taste; and the Christian that

reads him, with proper allowance for the poetical license taken in all works of imagination, becomes more and more confirmed in the great and leading truths of the Bible. But every child does not know that in order to make out a successful comedy the story must end in an elopement or clandestine marriage; and that in tragedy, marriage, or whatever be the principal subject of the plot, must end in murder; and that as marriage and murder are the most exciting subjects in the world, characters must be created to fill up the drama: and hence novelists are necessarily liars by profession.

CHAPTER IV.

VILLAGE SPORTS—SACRED MUSIC.

ALTHOUGH my parents were members of the Established Church, yet as that Church had in some measure fallen from her original purity, and become very lax in her discipline—as experimental religion was not insisted on in the pulpit, nor so much as hinted at in the pastoral visits of the minister of our parish—it is not to be wondered at if the members of our family were strangers to the vital power of godliness. But though the family altar had never been erected, yet my parents endeavored, as far as lay in their power, to give us good counsel, to set us a good example, and to prevent us, by wholesome restraint, from following the multitude to do evil. And to their praise be it recorded, quarreling, fighting, lying, drunkenness, and profane swearing, were unknown among us. We were always taught that these vices were of so vulgar and degrading a character that, for the honor of the family, we were

given to understand that its escutcheon should never be stained with so foul a blot. And greatly did it add to our domestic happiness that no cruel jealousies existed in the minds of my parents; no corroding envies were found among their children; no unhappy disputes occurred between our neighbors; no religious controversies were suffered to kindle strifes and animosities among them; nor vexatious law-suits to disturb the tranquillity of the village.

The amusements of the youthful villagers, with very few exceptions, were of such a character as neither injured the body nor corrupted the mind. They were more like the gymnastics of ancient Greece and Rome than the enervating and demoralizing pleasures of modern cities. There was neither bowling alley nor billiard room in the parish, nor theatre, nor play-house, that I know of, nearer than Oxford or Cambridge. Dancing, card playing, and gaming, were practices that belonged to more refined society than that of which our rustic neighborhood could boast. A lawyer, as already hinted, could not subsist within five miles of us; nor did

any physician, to the best of my recollection, ever attempt to settle in that healthful abode. I never heard of a house being burnt, nor of but one robbery, and not of one murder in the town, within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Such decided advantages, in point of happiness and morality, does a country village enjoy over the thickly populated city, where vice, like the noisome pestilence, walketh in darkness, and wasteth at noonday. Our summer months were invariably spent in useful toil and athletic diversions; and the long winter evenings with our parents at home, or at school with our fellows, in the acquisition of useful knowledge. At the time of which I now speak, prayer-meetings had not been set up, for Methodism and modern improvements had not yet found their way into the place.

One would hardly believe, in these days of Bible societies, and missionary meetings, and Sunday-school anniversaries, that the nation which now takes the lead in these evangelical enterprises, was, since the days of the Reformation, the most dissolute of all the Protestant nations in Europe. In

the reign of Elizabeth, “that bright *occidental* star, of most happy memory,” as she is called in the dedication to the English Bible, one of the writers of that period says: “As soon as the Christmas holidays (*holy days?*) had arrived, work and care were universally thrown aside; and instead of those devotional practices by which other countries commemorated the sacred occasion, England rang from one end to the other with mirth and jollity. Christmas carols were trolled in every street; masquerades and plays took possession of houses and churches indifferently; a Lord of Misrule, whose reign lasted from All-Hallows Eve [All Saints, Nov. 1] till the day after the feast of Pentecost, [Whitsuntide,] was elected in every noble household, to preside over the sports and fooleries of the inmates; while each member prepared himself either to enact some strange character, or to devise some new stroke of mirth. The towns, on these occasions, assumed a sylvan appearance; the houses were dressed with branches of ivy and holly; the churches were converted into leafy tabernacles; and standards,

bedecked with evergreens, were set up in the streets, while the young of both sexes danced round them. And in this sort they go to the church, (though the minister be at prayer or preaching,) dancing, and swinging their handkerchiefs over their heads in the church, like devils incarnate, with such a confused noise that no man can hear his own voice. Then, after this sort, about the church they go again and again, and so forth into the church-yard, where they have commonly their summer-halls, their bowers, arbors, and banqueting-houses set up, wherein they feast and dance all that day, (Sunday,) and peradventure all that night too."

—*Pictorial History of England*, chapter 6, p. 861. *Harper's Edition*, 1846.

Happily for the village in which I lived, these excesses were never practiced there, or had become obsolete before I was born. A few of the relics of former times, such as decorating the church with evergreens at Christmas, and paying particular attention to certain days and customs, still remained ; but Puritanism, and Quakerism, and Methodism, had stemmed the tide of wicked-

ness, and almost dried up that flood of ungodliness which in the sixteenth century overspread the land.

Sacred music, when I was a boy, was a favorite pursuit among some of the rustic inhabitants of our village. The cruel sports of olden times had in a great measure disappeared, but religion, in its life and power, had not filled their hearts with its sanctifying influences. The villagers were too virtuous to participate in those fashionable vices which stained the banners of our cities, and, as yet, too little evangelized to consecrate all their powers to the service of Him who bought them with his blood. They therefore sought diversion in the science of sweet sounds, believing, with Shakspeare, that—

“The man that hath no *music* in his soul,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet notes,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.”

Or, at least, acting upon the maxim of Plato,—

“*Gymnastics* for the body, *music* for the mind,”—
they spent their days in useful toil, and
their evenings in the cultivation of the

voice, and the study of music. And as profane songs were not in good repute, the virtuous and aspiring youth sought to distinguish himself among his country friends, either as a vocal or instrumental performer at the parish church, on the holy Sabbath. In these exercises our family, as before noted, took a prominent part, and each of us, either on an instrument, or with the voice, would, professedly at least, "make a joyful noise unto the Rock of our salvation." Our instruments, probably, were not always tuned to perfect unison, neither were our voices always in key, but they suited well the rude strains of our older poets, the cadences of whose verse were often very uneven; and if we pleased not the hyper-critical, we always tried to please ourselves, and, agreeably to the laws and liberties of musicians, always spoke well of our own performances. The recollection of those last remains of rural simplicity, even now, affords me considerable pleasure. Sometimes I imagine I can almost hear the old village clerk, in his peculiar twang, give out the first line of one of David's Psalms,

“old version,” at the commencement of the singing service, prefacing it, as he always did, with “Let us sing to the praise and glory of God,” giving to the word *glory* that peculiar sound which was common among country people in those days. And then, again, I seem to hear the strong blast of our best performers, who always sounded the key-note on their wind instruments; and the treble, tenor, counter, and bass notes of our well-trained vocalists, “echoing through the long-drawn aisle, and fretted vault” of that ancient church, whose pillars and turrets, according to the best accounts, had glistened in the summer’s sun, and stood the wintry blasts of at least nine hundred years. And then I think again of the words of my favorite bard—

“*O days forever fled, forever dear.*”

“Joys of my early hours!
The swallows on the wing,
The bees among the flowers,
The butterflies of spring,
Light as their lovely moments flew,
Were not more gay, more innocent than you:
And fugitive as they,
Like butterflies in spring,

Like bees among the flowers,
Like swallows on the wing,
How swift, how soon ye pass'd away,
Joys of my earlyhours!"—*Montgomery.*

On the subject of *music*, the late Rev. Charles Wesley has expressed himself with great propriety in the following stanza:—

"Music, at first by heaven design'd,
To calm the tumult of the mind,
When God doth lend his promised aid,
As Saul was well when David play'd:
But when it takes the tempter's part,
It fondly steals from God the heart;
It chases the good Spirit away,
And courts the evil one to stay."

The sentiments contained in these lines are undoubtedly just, and of their propriety there can be no doubt, when we consider that this most delightful, most exhilarating science, has been called in to the aid of wantonness and war, mirth and folly, in all their dissipating and soul-destroying influences. This, however, was not the case in my father's family; for although the English nation has been as notorious for its love of war and conquest, as some of its sovereigns have been for extravagance and folly, yet I am happy to say that none of

my ancestors, of whom I have any knowledge, ever wore the epaulette or drew the sword. Martial music and military costume had no particular charms for them, nor could the allurements of the opera or the theatre detain them from their homes a single night.

CHAPTER V.

CONVERSION OF MY OLDEST BROTHER.

MECHANICS, in some parts of England, are mostly musicians, and as nearly all my male relations belonged to that useful class of society, it is no wonder that I inherit a pretty large share of the love of the science of sweet sounds. I believe it was no evil spirit that allured my oldest brother to a Methodist meeting. He was passing by the place, and heard singing. It sounded a little different from what he had been used to hear in the old parish church. Instead of seeing a select number of musicians, with their loud-sounding instruments, elevated fifteen or twenty feet above the congregation, he saw a company of plain-looking people, all on the same floor, the men on one side the room, and the women on the other; the minister, without surplice or gown, standing, probably, on a platform, or box of wood, which raised him about six inches above the level of the floor, behind

an old-fashioned chair, with a high back, and a temporary book-board affixed to the top of it; for so our ministers used to stand, giving out a hymn, two lines at a time, as the custom then was. Who was the preacher I know not; what was the hymn I cannot tell; nor where it happened do I know; but I well recollect hearing my brother say that it was the *singing* that brought him into the meeting, and eventually led him to join the society. And one thing more do I well remember; it is this: There was one hymn which the Methodists used to sing, in those days, which was a great favorite with my brother; it had in it this verse:—

“ May I but find the grace,
To fill an humble place
In that inheritance above,
My tuneful voice I’ll raise
In songs of loudest praise,
And sing thy grace, redeeming Love.”

And on the supposition that he was under conviction for sin, and seeking rest for his soul, which I have great reason to believe was the case, if the preacher and congregation were singing that hymn at the time,

the whole procedure was calculated to make a lasting impression on his mind. I can easily suppose that "the men sung with all their might," for they often used to do so when they felt well in their minds ; that "the women sung the repeats alone," as Mr. Longden says they did in Sheffield when he first found his way among the Methodists ; that the forementioned hymn suited my brother's feelings ; and that the text and sermon were strikingly adapted to his case : and hence he might well conclude that the people he had found should be his people, and their God his God.

About this time my mother was taken very sick, and for a time was not expected to live. She knew that my brother had begun to pray in his chamber, and being greatly distressed in her mind, she desired him to pray with her. He complied with her request, as well as he could, and invited the preachers, and other pious persons, to join with him in this work of faith and labor of love. The Lord in mercy heard and answered their prayers, restored the sick to health, and made her happy in his

pardoning love. Morning and evening devotions were now introduced into the family; and though my father and four brothers did not yet profess religion, we all complied with the good old custom of *kneeling* in time of prayer. We had been taught this at church; and I believe we should as soon have thought of standing on our heads as of sitting down, while one was leading the devotions of the family.

Methodism, so called, was now fairly introduced into our family, and an addition was made to our library by the books I have mentioned in a former page. Of these new books, the most entertaining to me was the Journal of that good old sturdy Yorkshireman, John Nelson, who, if he had lived in Bunyan's time, would have passed very well for Mr. Standfast, if not for Great-heart himself. It was by the circulation of such books as these that Methodism took such a firm hold upon the minds of the people. Literature was not as cheap then as it is now. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was not then known, and the Penny Magazine was not then in

circulation. Novels, romances, and idle tales were not as abundant as they are now; but the reading with which we were supplied was of a more pure and healthy character than that which is now so dexterously got up and so extensively circulated. In reviewing this part of my life I cannot but be thankful that all bad books were kept out of my way ; and on the other hand I cannot but regret that when I had time, and a disposition to read, and was blest with a good memory, so few of our standard works fell in my way.

Religion, at this period, began to revive in the village. My brother was soon made leader of a class, and great was his fidelity in the cause of his blessed Master. He was truly a burning as well as a shining light. He reproved sin with some severity, but always spoke kindly to the penitent. If any were sick, or likely to die, he visited them diligently ; and being highly esteemed, both by the parish minister and the people in general, he was permitted to introduce the practice of singing a hymn at the grave of those who died in the Lord.

CHAPTER VI.

PROGRESS OF RELIGION IN OUR FAMILY.

I WAS now about twelve years of age, and at times began to feel a strong desire to obtain the enjoyment of religion. At this period there were four traveling preachers on the Bedford circuit, within the bounds of which I then lived; and though my heart was not fully renewed by the power of divine grace, I loved the house of God, the ministers of religion, and the means of grace. That my heart was depraved there can be no question, and yet I cannot recollect the time when I did not respect the services of the sanctuary, the preachers of the gospel, and the word of God. When and by whom Methodist preaching was first brought to Stewkley I am not able to say. The first Methodist minister, of whom I have any distinct recollection, was Mr. Thomas Rogers. He preached in a barn belonging to Mr. John Tomes, and took for his text Acts xiii, 41: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder,

and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." This was when I was about five years old, and yet I well remember where he stood and how he looked, and, if I mistake not, his voice was musical; at any rate, the words of the text were very euphonious to my ear, and his manner of pronouncing them very pleasant. The next preacher that I distinctly recollect was the Rev. Jacob Stanley, late president of the British Conference, and lately deceased. He preached in a private house belonging to Mr. West. This was in the year 1797.

At that time there were only one hundred and six circuits in all England, seven in Scotland, and thirty-two in Ireland. Now there are four hundred and twenty-six in England, fifteen in Scotland, fifty-three in Ireland, and eighteen Irish missions, three hundred and twenty-four foreign missions, and seventy in Canada under the British Conference, besides those in the Canada Conference, and those in the United States, North and South.

But to return to the preachers who were on our circuit at the time I experienced religion. I thought they were the best in the world. The superintendent, or preacher in charge, Rev. John Leppington, was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures ; a strict disciplinarian, rather arbitrary in his government, and on that account not a favorite with the people. The second, the Rev. Joseph Hallam, was remarkable for the depth of his piety, and the fervency of his zeal. He was a good preacher, and uncommonly powerful in prayer. The third, the Rev. Robert Finney, was indeed a wise and holy man of God, apparently of a meek and quiet spirit, and eminently a son of consolation. The fourth, the Rev. Robert Pilster, was a young man of very promising talent, and his zeal and piety were equal to his talents. It was the first year of his itinerancy, and yet he was so generally acceptable throughout the circuit that he was appointed a second year, which was not commonly the case with preachers on trial in those days. Under the faithful labors of these pious ministers the Lord was pleased

to revive his work gloriously on the circuit. The flame reached the village where I dwelt. Three more of my brothers were converted, and last of all, I, being the youngest of the family, was brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to an experience of the saving grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The process of this change, as near as I can recollect, was as follows: Some time in the autumn of 1803, when I was between twelve and thirteen years of age, hearing that there was to be a love-feast at a place about five miles from Stewkley, I felt a desire to go. I had been taught to believe that "all holy desires, just counsels, and good works proceed from God," and therefore, I think I may say, that the desire to go to the love-feast was produced in my heart by the Spirit of God. Be that as it may, I certainly felt a strong desire to go, and asked my only playmate, Frederick Bull, if he would go with me. He consented, and we went together. The room in which the love-feast was held was part of a dwelling-house, fitted up for the purpose. The pulpit was precisely such a one as I

have described in a former chapter,—an old arm-chair with a book-board fixed to the top. Behind this, the preacher stood on a platform six or eight inches high, and if one of the elders more corpulent than the rest, occupied the front part of the chair, there was no danger of its tipping over. On one side of the room stood a carpenter's bench. This was the gallery for the singers ; but though I had always been honored with a place in the choir, on ordinary occasions, yet at this time I felt as if I had no right to obtrude myself in so conspicuous a position ; and feeling withal somewhat diffident, I took my stand behind the preacher, as much out of sight as possible. A revival of religion had commenced on the circuit. The preacher was much animated, and the brethren and sisters were quite lively, and free to speak of the love of God. I do not recollect that I felt any particular emotion, other than great seriousness of spirit, until my oldest brother gave in his testimony concerning the progress of religion in his own soul, and in our family. In doing this he was considerably excited himself, and

spoke with much feeling, all which I think I could have endured without manifesting any signs of special emotion, if he had not said : “ There is the youngest of the family standing behind the preacher.” This cut me to the heart, and produced feelings which I cannot describe—a mixture of shame, and fear, and hope. My pride was somewhat offended, and yet my spirit was humbled. I did not like to be exposed before all the congregation, and yet I felt that it was just ; for I was among the people of God, and I knew that I was not one of them ; but, having gone so far, I did not see that any good was likely to ensue if I turned back again, and therefore, in the strength of divine grace, I resolved to break off at once, and entirely, all childish sports and foolish plays and evil company. My conviction of sin was not very deep, nor my sorrow very pungent. I was rather drawn by cords of love than driven by fear, to seek the salvation of my soul. I had but little knowledge of the way of salvation, and all that I could do was to “ cease to do evil, and learn to do well.” I therefore ab-

stained from all practices which I knew to be contrary to the word of God, and attended on all the means of grace within my reach. But there were no protracted meetings at that time—no prayer meetings after preaching—no invitation given to mourners to come to the altar for prayers; but the way in which people experienced religion was chiefly in prayer-meetings, class-meetings, love-feasts, or under the preaching of the word, without the aid of those extra efforts, which have been used with evident success in later times.

One of the ministers hearing that I was under concern of mind, visited our family, and in conversation with my father advised that I should join the society. My father objected on account of my youth; but the minister prevailed, and took my name as a probationer and seeker. I continued to meet regularly in class, but it was three months before I obtained the evidence of my acceptance with God. It was on a Thursday evening, in the month of November, 1803, after prayer-meeting, that I retired to my chamber purposely to pray for

the blessing of pardon. At first I obtained no answer. I then went again ; and again, the third time,—and as often returned without success. At length the hour for retiring to bed arrived. My mother, supposing I needed some refreshment, offered me something to eat. As I took it in my hand I thought within myself, “I will never eat again of the bread that perisheth till God gives me the bread of life.” I did not speak the words, but felt as if I were willing to fast until I obtained the blessing. A vow to that effect might have been improper, and God, who knows the heart, did not require it of me, even if it had been right ; but, seeing the desire of my heart, he graciously accepted the will for the deed, and in that very moment, when I felt as if I were willing to die rather than be deprived of the blessing, he instantly spoke peace to my soul, and filled me with joy and peace in believing. Up to that moment my mind was dark, now it was light in the Lord ; before, it was burdened, now the burden was entirely taken away. The change was as great as it was sudden, and glorious as

it was great. Before that blessed moment, if an experienced Christian, or an able minister of the New Testament, had told me that my sins were forgiven, I might have believed it, but I should not have been satisfied as I was now, for now “*I felt* that I did trust in Christ, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.”

“ Long my imprison’d spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night :
Thine eye diffused a quick’ning ray ;
I woke ; the dungeon flamed with light :
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and follow’d thee.”

My happiness was now complete. The guilt and burden of sin were removed. The fear of death and hell was taken away. I loved God with all my heart, and, as far as I understood, my neighbor as myself ; or, perhaps I had better say, I felt nothing contrary to love, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Public worship, family prayer, and secret devotion were always pleasant. The days of the week glided swiftly and sweetly away, and the Sabbath of the Lord was

then, as it always has been since, to me "*The Pearl of Days.*" From six to seven o'clock on Sabbath morn, in summer, and from seven to eight in winter, we had prayer-meetings in the Methodist chapel. From nine to ten o'clock, (for we had no Sunday-school then,) was the hour of class. At half past ten, at two, and at six, we had public preaching either by the traveling or local preachers. Our circuit preachers were, in my estimation, the best that could be, and our local preachers, though differing greatly among themselves, were very acceptable. But the most pleasing of that class of disinterested laborers was my mother's cousin, Mr. John Stonhill. He had a pleasant voice, a graceful delivery, and withal was a very instructive expounder of the word of God. On Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings we had prayer-meetings in different parts of the town; on Wednesday evenings, class-meetings; and, once in two weeks, preaching on Friday evenings. Our family dwelling was now a Bethel. Six out of eight enjoyed religion, and the others were seriously disposed. We

had much peace before, now it flowed like a river. These were times long to be remembered. Riches did not endanger our salvation, nor did poverty "repress" or "freeze the genial current of the soul," in its holy aspirations after heavenly and divine things. We had food and raiment, and were therewith content. The din of politics did not disturb us; and though the demon of war raged throughout Europe, its immediate ravages did not reach us. Domestic broils did not break the peace of the family, nor controversies that of the Church.

This happy state of things continued, with but little interruption, until I was fifteen years of age, when it fell to my lot to bid farewell to my native place, and all the dear delights of home. The circuit preachers have since finished their work and gone to their reward. My parents and four brothers have taken their leave of this world, and the remaining branches of the family, with many others since added to the number, are separated by oceans, rivers, and mountains. The old family mansion is occupied by other inmates; "the bees

among the flowers," and "the swallows on the wing," have long since taken their last flight. The fruit-trees, and that venerable elm, are cut down and consumed, and the whole face of things, as I have since been informed, is entirely changed. The little chapel, after having been enlarged, has been supplanted by a larger one erected in its place. The old parish church still stands, but "those evening bells," which so charmed me in childhood and youth, I shall probably never hear again. O ! how I felt not long since, when I heard an English family, with two or three others accompanying them, sing the following beautiful stanzas, in a tune most plaintive and most appropriate to the words :—

" Those evening bells, those evening bells,
How many a tale their music tells,
Of youth, and home, and that sweet time
When last I heard their soothing chime !

" Those joyous hours have pass'd away,
And many a friend that then was gay,
Within the tomb now darkly dwells,
And hears no more those evening bells.

" And soon 'twill be when I am gone,
Your tuneful peals will still ring on,

While other bards will walk those dells,
And sing your praise, sweet evening bells.”
T. MOORE.

The bells in Stewkley church were only five in number, and not near so musical, or rich in tone, as those of Soulbury and Wing. These places are about three miles distant from Stewkley, one directly south, and the other south-east. These bells used to ring almost every evening, after harvest, all through the fall, and sometimes in winter; and when the air was still, and the wind favorable, their music, to me, was exceedingly sweet.

FORTY years have rolled away since I bade farewell to those domestic scenes which were the joy of my heart during their short continuance, and which, to this day, remain a source of delightful recollection. They were the scenes of my childhood and youth, the “joys of my early hours,” and, in many respects, the most pleasant of my life. The ignorance, helplessness, and dangers of infancy, like the mists of the morning, had passed away; the burden and heat of the day had not wasted my strength, or weakened

my courage; and the cares and infirmities of after life, like the shadows of approaching night, had not yet arrived. Disease had not yet begun to prey upon my constitution, but I enjoyed the luxury of health in a high degree. My mind was active and aspiring, and my spirits were often elevated beyond measure, which made life a scene of exquisite enjoyment. The memory, strengthening every day, multiplied past pleasures, like the colors in a prism, again and again; and the imagination, always on the wing, soared and expatiated in fields of fancied delight. Hope, with more than magic power, borrowed much from the future; and as cruel "disappointment" had not yet begun to "laugh at hope's career," my cup of joy sometimes was full to overflowing. As to persecution, or outward hinderances in the way of religion, I had none to endure; and as to the "war within," of which I have heard some older Christians complain, I scarcely knew what it meant. If I knew not as much then as I do now, I was not half as much troubled with anxious forebodings, and needless fears, as I have

been since. The fire of ambition, which, probably, some persons mistake for Christian zeal, had not yet begun to burn in my bones. Neither had that unquenchable thirst for fame which, I fear, in too many persons, usurps the place of a desire to do good, robbed me of my nightly slumbers. I had my troubles, no doubt, but was neither

“Crazed with care, nor cross’d in hopeless love;”
for of those two greatest “ills which flesh is heir to,” I then knew nothing. But those days are gone by, and take them for all in all,

“I shall never look upon their like again.”

Let me not, however despond, for there is a world—

“Where skies, eternally serene,
Diffuse ambrosial balm
Through sylvan isles forever green,
O'er seas forever calm :

While saints and angels kindling in his rays,
On the full glory of the Godhead gaze,
And taste, and prove, in that transporting sight,
Joy without sorrow, without darkness light.”

Montgomery.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LAST OF MY SCHOOL-BOY DAYS.

BEFORE I proceed to give an account of the hardships and privations that befell me during my apprenticeship, I must indulge myself in recalling a few little incidents which I have omitted to mention in the foregoing narrative.

Before I experienced religion I was excessively fond of play. But happily for me I then lived in a country village, where, having but little knowledge of the ways of the world, few temptations, and but little money to spend, I was mercifully kept from the paths of the destroyer. At this period, and before I was able to use the axe, the chisel, or the plane, as the old schoolmaster was dead, and as there was no other school in the village, my mother, to keep me out of mischief, and for the purpose of improving her finances a little, obliged me to learn the art of making straw-braid, which then was a very profitable business; and as I was

promised a share of the profits, I cheerfully complied with her behests. My instructress in this business was an elderly lady, who had been twice married, but had no children. In some respects she resembled Shenstone's schoolmistress :—

“Her cap, far whiter than the driven snow,
Emblem right meet of decency did yield ;
Her apron, dyed in grain, as blue, I trow,
As is the hare-bell that adorns the field ;
And in her hand a sceptre she did wield.—
Oft noises intermix'd did thence resound
And learning's little tenement betray,

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Where sat the dame, disguised in look profound,
And eyed her fairy throng, and twined her wheel
around.

One ancient hen she took delight to feed,
The plodding pattern of the busy dame,
Which ever and anon, impell'd by need,
Into her school begirt with chickens came,—
Such favor did her past deportment claim ;
And if neglect had lavish'd on the ground
Fragment of bread, she would collect the same ;
For well she knew, and quaintly could expound,
What sin it were to waste the smallest crum she
found.

Herbs, too, she knew, and well of each could speak,
That in her garden sipp'd the silvery dew,
Where no vain flower disclosed a gaudy streak,

But herbs for use,* and physic not a few,
Of gray renown within those borders grew ;
The tufted basil, pun-provoking thyme,
Fresh baum, and marigold of cheerful hue,
The lowly gill that never dares to climb,
And more I fain would sing, disdaining here to rhyme.”

Shenstone's Schoolmistress.

Four persons, including husband and wife, and nephew and niece, constituted the family proper; but there were plenty of domestic animals, besides the hen and chickens mentioned in the foregoing lines, belonging to the establishment. The husband of my instructress kept a small tavern, well known by the sign of the King’s Head. He brewed his own beer, kept a very orderly house, and lived well. There was no bar-room, properly speaking, for he sold but very little liquor, and, in fact, it might be called a temperance tavern. Had it been otherwise, my parents would not have placed me there. The customers were mostly farmers and mechanics, and though they drank beer, they did it very moderately. They were, if I may so speak, too virtuous, too

* My instructress was not only called the *landlady*, but also the *doctoress*, by the villagers.

poor, or too stingy, to get drunk ; in fact, I never knew a confirmed drunkard in that place.

The landlady differed widely from her husband in every respect. She was twice his age, and nearly twice his weight, he being very thin and slender, and she quite the reverse. He was a stiff Churchman, and she a stanch Methodist. However, I never heard them dispute about religion, for he "had none to speak of," and hers was of the quiet kind that never disturbed anybody. The nephew was but a boy, and younger than myself; therefore I have but little to say of him, either good or bad. But the niece was a charming young woman. She was also a member of the Methodist Society, and the best singer in the village. I was much younger than she, and as I then had a very flexible and musical treble voice, we often sang together, by the hour, all the best tunes, and finest pieces of sacred music, that fell in our way. The demand for new tune-books then was not as great as it is now. Tune-makers, and composers of anthems and set pieces,

were not half as numerous as they now are, but they were much more competent, and consequently the music was of a higher order than that which is made merely to sell. What was made was of the best sort, and what was learned was learned thoroughly, and sung well, and produced a better effect than is generally the case in these days. I speak of that which was in use in the Methodist chapels in England forty years ago. These *lively ditties*, which are now so much sung in our social meetings in this country, were altogether unknown among us at that time. The pieces we used to sing, to which I have referred, were Denmark, Poland, Sheffield, The Dying Christian, Cheshunt, Bermondsey, Canaan, Jordan, Crucifixion, and nearly all those found in Dyer's Collection. All these, and many others, we sung from memory; and as our work did not interfere with our singing, nor our singing with our work, we lost no time, but gained improvement every day. To the lovers of that mechanical kind of harmony in which there is plenty of *art*, but very little *genius*, and of that in which

there is a superabundance of both, such singing as ours might not possess many charms ; but to ourselves, and to our little auditory, its attractions were greater than those of a full orchestra, with Jenny Lind in the centre, simply because we understood it better.

At this period of my life I was extravagantly fond of the beauties of creation, and in the gratification of my taste in this particular, perhaps few places could afford more innocent enjoyment than the luxuriant fields of my native place. It is said of Linnæus, that when he first saw the “yellow-blossomed furze,” growing on the wilds of an uncultivated waste, he fell down on his knees, and thanked God for creating such beautiful flowers. On the commons, within about a mile from my home, there was abundance of this prickly shrub, and in the meadows, thousands and millions of daisies, cowslips, primroses, and violets. But what pleased me more than all these was a field of English beans when in blossom. When planted in rows, in a good strong loamy soil, such as that in Stewkley field, if the

season be favorable, they grow to the height of three feet, or perhaps a little more. The stem is about as thick as one's little finger, and hollow. The leaves and pods stand erect, and when fully ripe turn black. The blossoms are a mixture of white, lilac, and purple, and emit a strong and fragrant odor. One might easily compare them to a regiment of soldiers on parade, each dressed in appropriate uniform, with a beautiful plume of flowers waving in the summer breeze, with this difference, that although the field of beans is destined to be cut down, it is not with murderous intent, but for the profit of the farmer, and for the benefit of his horses, for whose use, principally, they were planted. For a more particular description of the English horse-bean, I would refer the reader to the Penny Cyclopedias; and for poetical descriptions of rural scenery, and moral reflections, to such writers as Thomson, Mudie, Bloomfield, Hervey, Sturm, and St. Pierre.

When I was old enough to work in the field, I hired myself for one season to assist in making hay. My employer's farm was

all in meadow land, and it took five weeks, including the month of June, and part of July, to accomplish our task. The meadows were nearly two miles from the house, and to save time, we took our breakfast, dinner, and afternoon lunch, in the field. Walking to the fields early in the morning, and working all day in the open air, gave us a most vigorous appetite; and never have I seen the day when fat pork, boiled with cabbage, peas, and kidney-beans, or the like, tasted so well as they did during the whole of those five weeks. Our afternoon lunch consisted of bread and cheese, and home-brewed beer; and never did a little company of men and boys dispose of a reasonable portion of those good creatures with a better grace, or with more thankful hearts, than we. Intemperance and profanity were all out of the question. Our employer was a pious man, and all his workmen, I believe, except one, professed religion; so that the scene of our labors was more like the field of Boaz, (Ruth ii, 4,) than most of the harvest fields in those days. Yes, "Master Eddy," for so we used to call him, was a

good man, and filled some important offices in the Church of God. Moreover, he was very useful, as appears by the following notice of him in the Methodist Magazine for 1835: "From his youth he was the subject of divine impressions, and much devoted to the Lord in prayer. When the Bedford circuit preachers first visited Stewkley they were entertained at his mother's house, and formed a society, of which he was one of the first members. He commenced his career of usefulness by visiting his neighbors, expounding the Scriptures, and praying with them in their own houses; and thus was a good work begun in many families, and in the neighboring villages. He was for many years an active and useful class-leader and local preacher; and it was the joy of his heart to see sinners converted to God. He continued his labors of visiting and meeting his classes till within three weeks of his death. Thus, after going in and out before the Lord's people, with an unblemished character, for nearly sixty years, he died at Stewkley, after a short illness, in the eighty-second year of his age."

There seems to be a slight discrepancy between this account of father Eddy in regard to the introduction of Methodism into Stewkley, and my distinct recollection of the fact of hearing Mr. Thomas Rogers preach in Mr. Tomes's barn, for which I can only account on the supposition that the house of Mr. West was too small for the congregation, and therefore they occupied the barn. The first chapel was built in 1799. Mr. Stanley was stationed on the Bedford circuit in 1797, and preached in Mr. West's house; and on the supposition that Mr. Rogers preached in the barn in 1796, I concluded that that was the beginning of Methodism in Stewkley.

Mr. Samuel Copleston was one of the local preachers on the Bedford circuit. He was the son of a clergyman of Luton, and removed to Leighton when he was a young man, and was instrumental in forming the first Methodist class in that place. He pursued a course similar to that of father Eddy, and was highly respected both in life and death. In person he was very tall and very slender, with a voice and features pe-

culiarly feminine. His business was that of a schoolmaster, and his language and manner in public speaking were highly refined and interesting.

Before I took my final leave of Stewkley I made several attempts to try my hand at some more profitable business than that of braiding straw. One of these was that of making shoes. One of our local preachers of the name of Harris stayed at my father's one night. I was so delighted with his company that I wanted to go and live with him, and learn to make shoes—not that I had any particular desire to hammer leather on the lapstone, or put it together on the last; but I had a wish to go and live with Mr. Harris, I thought he was such a good man. My father consented, and I tried it five weeks. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Harris, and a son and daughter, all truly pious. We had preaching once a fortnight, in the house, by the traveling preachers, and prayer-meeting, class-meeting, or preaching every Sabbath. All this suited me right well; but the close confinement of the shop, a constant headache, and

a most inveterate cough, caused my friends to think that I might become the victim of pulmonary consumption, and with regret I left one of the best homes that I ever had. My next situation was less pleasant, and because some of my associates were decidedly irreligious, I soon gave that up. The brother of my employer hearing of my objections, desired me to come and live with him ; to which I readily agreed.

CHAPTER VIII.

FAREWELL TO HOME.

IT was in the sunny month of June, in the year 1806—the year of the great solar eclipse—just as I had completed my fifteenth year, that I took my final leave of my father's house, with all the dear delights of home, and the still dearer enjoyments of the house of God, in which I had so often mingled my juvenile voice with the devotions of his people. It was necessary that I should learn some trade, or calling, in the exercise of which I might procure an honest livelihood ; and, as yet, I knew nothing of consequence of any mechanical art, or of the mysteries of trade and commerce. One brother gave it as his opinion that I might make a good mechanic, but my father was unwilling that I should spend my strength in hewing and polishing wood, the grain of which is often very cross ; and he, therefore, readily agreed to the proposal of the friend who wished me to come and reside with him

at Ampthill, in the county of Bedford, seventeen miles from my native place. I had never been so far from home before. Railroads were not then in fashion, stage coaches did not travel that way, and therefore it was necessary either to hire a conveyance, or go on foot. But fare was high and funds were low, and the only alternative was to take it a-foot and make the best of it. I had one brother, whom I had often assisted both in the shop and in the garden, and he was now as ready to return me a kindness as I had been to render one to him in the time of need. We set out in the morning, and arrived at the place soon after the middle of the day. My brother tarried with me a little while and then returned, leaving me in a place which I had never seen before. Of course everything was new and strange to me, and made a deep and lasting impression on my mind. My employment was to be that of a grocer and draper and general storekeeper, in a market-town, eight miles from Bedford, and forty-eight from London. My employer and his wife were members of the society of

Friends. He was an elder, and she was a minister of that order. He wore a broad-brimmed hat, which was turned up behind, and a little on both sides. In other respects the dresses of both were made according to the fashion of the Friends in those days. Of their religious principles I have nothing to remark at this time, only that they were what we should now call *orthodox*. With their moral worth and true piety I was favorably impressed from the first to the last. That they were both born of the Spirit I cannot doubt; but how they managed to keep religion alive in the soul without singing and prayer, unless they did it in spirit without the aid of the bodily powers, I cannot tell. Under the hospitable roof of these kind friends I took my first night's lodging in Ampthill, with feelings of no ordinary interest. The order observed at meal-times was different from that to which I had been accustomed, and the manner of retiring to rest was altogether different. Instead of vocal prayer and praise before or after meals, we had sometimes a chapter read in the Bible, and a silent waiting upon God in

spirit. To a mind less affected by outward things this course might be profitable, but to me, who needed the help of outward forms, it was not so.

At that time there was no Methodist meeting in Ampthill, or within less distance than two or three miles, so that I was cut off at once from all my former privileges. All the religious services then in the place were preaching in the old Established church, in the forenoon, and in a small room, by the Baptists, in the evening, and silent worship by the Friends, forenoon and afternoon. The rector of the Episcopal church held two livings, but did not reside in Ampthill. The sheep of his flock were without a shepherd all the working days of the week, for the curate lived at another place, and only served them once on the Sabbath. But I presume the sheep were about as well calculated to take care of themselves as the legalized shepherd was to take care of them, and perhaps his absence was as profitable as his presence. This being the case, it is wonderful to me that the Methodists kept away as long as they did,

and I can only account for it from the fact that society in that part of the country, for many miles round, was differently organized from what it is in many other parts of England. The Duke of Bedford, Lord Holland, Lord Ossory, Lady Lucas, and others of the nobility and gentry, either resided on or owned large estates in that part of the county. The influence of that class of landlords generally goes to the support of the Established Church, and that of the tenants is very often controlled by that of the landlord. Considering these things, it is not so much to be wondered at that when I first went to live at Ampthill there was no Methodist meeting there. I might have gone to the Friends' meeting, but that did not suit my turn. They were fond of *silence*, and I was fond of *singing*: they had no regular preaching, and when anyone did adventure to get up and speak it was in a tone and style not at all conformable to my taste. I like the singing of hymns right well, but the singing of sermons I never did like, and probably never shall. On rainy Sabbaths I was, so to speak, compelled to go

to Quaker meeting; but to sit for a whole hour without hearing a word of prayer, or praise, or exhortation, or exposition of some holy text, was not to my liking, nor to edification. What are tongues and ears made for, but to communicate and to receive the things of the Spirit? The true Friends—the real disciples of the founders of silent meetings—might possibly be drawn into closer union with each other by indulging in an “agreeing spirit of incommunicativeness;” but as I had not “so learned Christ,” it was not so with me. David, on one occasion, says: “I kept silence even from good words, but it was pain and grief to me.” He then adds, “While I was thus musing the fire burned, then *spake* I with my tongue;” and the disciples of Christ also said, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he *talked* to us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?” Paul and Silas might have had a very profitable *silent* waiting upon God in the prison at Philippi, but it seems they thought that singing, and praying *aloud*, was better; and so it proved.

Finding no food for my soul at the

Friends' meeting, I sometimes attended at the Episcopal church. But here the minister was not as good a reader as the one in my native village, and the voice of the parish clerk was not at all pleasant to my ear ; and then, the singing was so poor I could not endure it, and the preaching was not much better. I then turned aside and went to hear the Baptist minister at Malden, the Rev. Mr. Hobson. If I understood him right, he had been brought up among Methodists in Yorkshire, but had studied for the ministry with the Rev. Mr. Bull, of Newport Pagnel. He was an excellent preacher, as to matter, never controversial, but decidedly evangelical, though hardly animated enough to come up to my juvenile standard of pulpit eloquence. The singing also pleased me well, though the singers did not, for they did not invite me to take a seat with them, which I regretted the less, as there was not a young person of my age in the choir. They used no instruments but the voice ; sung only two parts of the harmony, the treble and bass. As many in the congregation as were able

joined with the leader in singing the air. The principal singers sat on both sides of a long table, at the head of which, near the pulpit, sat the leader, facing the congregation. He was a very large old gentleman, with a voice as clear as a bell, and sufficiently loud for the purpose. But what amused me most, was to hear the old deacon read the hymns, the minister never reading in that church. He occupied a little pent-up desk in front of the pulpit, if, indeed, it was not a part of the pulpit, as a lady's pocket, now-a-days, is part of the dress itself, which was not the case in the days of my grandmother. There, in that little sentry-box, the good old deacon, before and after prayer, and after sermon, read the psalms and hymns, with an accent, emphasis, pronunciation, and tone peculiarly antique. In the word *calm*, he always sounded the *l*, and in the word *despicable*, he put the accent on the *i*, and sounded the *a* broad and flat, as in *cable*; thus: "How dés-pì-cáble to our eyes!" This church I shall long remember, and the deacon I shall not soon forget.

Ampthill is delightfully situated, midway between Dunstable and Bedford, and about forty-eight miles from London. Near the town, on the north side, is a spacious and beautiful park, remarkable for its venerable oaks. These oaks always attracted my attention, on account of their prodigious size, and extreme old age. One of them was hollow. It is said of old Mr. Dodd that he preached a sermon on the word *malt*, in an old hollow tree, but this was not the tree, I presume; and yet with equal truth I can say, that some young men, in my day, held a social prayer-meeting in the old oak in Ampthill Park. On another of these venerable oaks was the following inscription, painted on a board, and affixed to the tree:—

“ Majestic tree, whose wrinkled form hath stood,
Age after age, the patriarch of the wood ;
Thou who hast seen a thousand springs unfold
Their ravel’d buds and dip their flowers in gold,
Ten thousand times yon moon re-light her horn,
And that bright star of evening gild the morn ;
Gigantic oak, thy hoary head sublime,
Erewhile must perish in the wreck of time.
Should round thy head no nocuous lightnings shoot,
And no fierce whirlwind shake thy steadfast root,

Yet shalt thou fall, thy leafy tresses fade,
And those bare scatter'd antlers strew the glade—
Arm after arm shall leave the mold'ring bust,
And thy firm fibres crumble into dust.
The muse alone would consecrate thy name,
And bid her powerful art prolong thy fame;
Green bid thy leaves expand, thy branches play,
And 'bloom forever in the' immortal lay."

On the west side of Ampthill Park, and near the gate, stands a stone pillar, called Queen Catharine's Cross, which was erected in memory of the unfortunate wife of Henry VIII., who, after being divorced from her husband, chose Ampthill Park as the place of her future residence. The castle in which Catharine resided stood where the cross now stands. On the opposite side of the park stands the noble mansion called Ampthill House, the country seat of Lord Holland, but which was occupied by the family of Lord Ossory at the time that I lived at Ampthill. A little to the south-east of Lord Ossory's is another beautiful park, in which are the magnificent ruins of Houghton House, built by the Countess of Pembroke, sister to Sir Philip Sidney. "Near to the entrance of Houghton Park," one historian

says, "stood a pear tree, in which Sir Philip wrote his Arcadia." Another writer, in the Penny Cyclopaedia, says that he wrote this work at the seat of his brother-in-law, the Earl of Pembroke, at Wilton. The ruins of Houghton House, and the splendid vista overlooking the vale of Bedford, I have seen, but the Arcadia I have not seen, nor the pear-tree in which it was said to have been written.

From my earliest recollections the town and county of Bedford have always possessed attractions, and an interest above all other towns and counties in England. In the church-yard of Renhold, near Bedford, my uncle, late vicar of that place, lies buried. In the village of Elstow John Bunyan was born ; and, if I mistake not, I have heard " those evening bells," which once charmed, and afterwards alarmed that inimitable allegorizer ; and what to me was more interesting, I have stood on the spot where his body was imprisoned for twelve years, and sat in the " big arm-chair" that stood in the vestry of the old Baptist meeting-house, where the Rev. Samuel Hilliard, one of his suc-

sors, preached for many years with great success. In the same church where Mr. Wesley preached his famous sermon, called "The Great Assize," I once heard the Rev. Legh Richmond preach a charity sermon, on behalf of the Bedford Infirmary, after which His Grace the Duke of Bedford, and Samuel Whitbread, Esq., M. P., held the plates to receive the collections. Such a collection I never saw, either before or since—it was mostly all in silver and gold. The text which Mr. Richmond chose was 2 Cor. viii, 8: "I speak not this by way of commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love." The residence of the great philanthropist, Howard, was at Cardington, near Bedford; and within the bounds of the corporation of Bedford now lives my only surviving brother, and his only daughter. The present Premier of England, Lord John Russell, claims for his birth-place Woburn Abbey, in this county; and it affords me pleasure to be able to say I was personally acquainted with one of his lordship's private tutors, Jeremiah Wiffen, the elegant translator of

Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered. Wiffen was the son of a Quaker. His mother was a widow at the time to which I refer. She was a woman of uncommon energy of character, and being a tenant of the Duke of Bedford, it is no wonder that her son, who was a very sprightly youth, should find a temporary home in the great house.

The first four years of my apprenticeship passed away very heavily. As my employer kept no other apprentice, or clerk, the hardest part of the work fell on me. The store was not very large ; adjoining it, however, was a warehouse or second store. My duty was to open and close the store, dress the windows, keep them clean, set out goods, and take them in at night, scour the scales, and trim the lamps, keep the store in order, go on errands, and wait on customers. We sold everything that is generally kept in a country store. We had a good run of customers, and I was kept very busy from Monday morning till late on Saturday night. Our principal market was on Thursday, and then, as many people, rich and poor, came in from the country, to "do a

little trading," poor *Giles*^{*} had to be up early, decorate the windows, and put everything in order, in and about the store; eat his breakfast in a hurry, get his dinner when he could, and wait for his supper till the hurry of business was over. I sometimes thought that I had more to do than I was able to accomplish, and that my employer exacted more of me than he ought. We kept no fire in the store all winter, and lest we should lose a customer the door must be kept open, winter as well as summer, from morning till night. This being the case, I suffered more from cold than from any other cause. I remember, on one occasion, being called away from my dinner thirteen times, to wait on customers, and on another occasion, being so busy all day, as to have no time to get my dinner till evening, which was about the time that my Lord Ossory took his, so that if I dined late that day, I kept "quality hours." In this respect I was about on a par with the Waterloo soldier, who fought all day without food, and dined at the same hour as the

^{*} Bloomfield's Farmer's Boy.

Duke of Wellington. There was, however, a vast difference between the shopman and the soldier—the one was doing all he could to prolong life, the other to destroy it. This reference to the battle of Waterloo may seem far-fetched and incongruous, but the fact is, England, at that time, was at war with France, and soon after with America, and strange as it may seem, trade and commerce, the arts and manufactures, agriculture and the stocks, were more flourishing then than at any other time; and consequently, while all the world was busy abroad, we were equally busy at home. Napoleon ridiculed the English for their want of martial spirit, and called them “a nation of shopkeepers.” Perhaps, by the time he had done his day’s work at Waterloo, he was of a different mind.

Our country, at that time, was as full of the martial spirit as need be. The army in the field, and the navy on the ocean, were constantly losing, by hundreds and thousands, their best warriors; and the vacancies thus occasioned had to be supplied from volunteer companies, the local

militia, and the army of reserve at home. Our shopkeepers, therefore, were old men and women, and boys, like myself. During this part of my apprenticeship I endured considerable physical suffering, and occasionally much mental disquietude. In summer, the confinement of the store, from morning till night, six days in the week, was very irksome. I wanted to be abroad in the fields, making hay, or reaping grain, and spending my time with the jolly farmers, in the open air. In the cold and dreary winter I suffered much from sore hands and cold feet. We sold all kinds of groceries and drugs, and I had very often to go from handling such things to wait on customers in the dry-goods and thread-and needle department. Could I have kept to one branch of business all the time, I should not have minded it, if my hands had been ever so dirty ; but to have to wash them twenty times a day, and not time to wipe them dry, in cold winter weather, exposed me to sufferings beyond anything I had ever endured. The sailor boy, no doubt, suffers grievously for the first few years of

his nautical life ; but he has not to go every half hour from handling wet ropes, and frozen rigging, to measuring ribbon, and counting needles ! It was the sudden and frequent changes from one thing to another that made the business of a general store-keeper so painful and unpleasant.

But to make the matter still worse, my employer was not content with a moderate business, and, therefore, after I had been with him four years, he purchased a house and store, and other buildings, three times as large as the one formerly occupied, and added to his former business that of taking in grain and selling coal. Dealing in grain I did not so much dislike, but the selling of coal was an abomination to me, and the more so as we had to retail it in small quantities, for the accommodation of those who could not afford to purchase a ton at a time. In the old store our windows were small, and to clean them, and dress them, was no great affair. But now our windows must be as large as our neighbors', and be kept as clean, and dressed out as well, as theirs. Our store was the most prominent

one in the market-place. The windows were large and lofty, and the shutters must necessarily correspond; but to put them up at night, and take them down in the morning, covered with ice, as they were sometimes in winter, with hands as sore and as painful as could well be, was almost more than I could endure. Through mercy, however, I did endure it, till the business had so increased that my employer took a lady to assist in the dry goods department, and another apprentice to assist in mine. And, moreover, as the store was much larger, and required warming in winter, a stove was provided, which seemed to please the customers as well as those who served. The lady could measure muslin and ribbons, while I sold drugs and medicines; and John—poor John, how sorrowful he looked when any one wanted half a hundred weight, or half a bushel of coal—could take my place in the primary department, while I was promoted a step higher. This change was very salutary to me. My hands soon got well, my health improved, and my heart was glad; and I ought to record it, as a

redeeming circumstance, that during my greatest sufferings my employer's table was well supplied, morning, noon, and night, with the best the market afforded. In fact we had four meals a day; breakfast at eight, dinner at twelve, tea at five, and supper at eight; and however cold I might be during the day, I always went to bed warm, and slept soundly till morning light. I could not adopt the language of Jacob, and say, "In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes." The language of Bloomfield was better adapted to my case:—

"Delicious sleep! from sleep who could forbear,
With no more guilt than *Giles*, and no more care?
Peace o'er his slumbers waves her guardian wing,
Nor conscience once disturbs him with a sting;
He wakes refresh'd from every trivial pain,
Renews his toil, and trudges on again."

Farmer's Boy.

During this long period—for long it seemed to me—my religious privileges, as before stated, were considerably curtailed. Before I left home I was permitted to attend three,

four, and sometimes five meetings on a week evening—now, not one! Then I could attend four meetings on a Sabbath, and had to walk only about fifty rods from home to the chapel. Now, if I went to a Methodist meeting, I had to walk three miles to the place, and three miles back again; and if I stayed to the evening meeting, to walk home alone, through dismal fields and dreary roads; unless, as on some occasions, my Lidlington friends accompanied me part of the way. Silent meetings did not suit my taste. The service at the old Episcopal church had lost its charm, chiefly on account of the unmusical way in which it was performed. The preaching of the Baptist minister better suited my inquiring mind. It was not doctrinal, nor controversial, nor declamatory, but historical, expository, and instructive, and I could have sat under his ministry with delight, if the members of the Church had shown a friendly feeling. But they did not, and this led me to seek acquaintances among my own people. And here I found congenial spirits, particularly in the families of Mr. Rowe and Mr. Biggs.

These dear old friends took me by the hand, and treated me with as much kindness as if I had been a brother, or a son. Lidlington was a small country town, about three miles from Ampthill.

The preachers who officiated there were mostly the same as those who served in the same capacity at Stewkley. Circuits were larger then than they now are; and it was some comfort to me to hear those whom I had been accustomed to hear in former days. They were the local brethren; for Lidlington being a small place, we were not favored with the labors of the itinerancy, except once a fortnight, on a week-day evening; and as my opportunities for hearing preaching were only on the Sabbath, I heard the traveling preachers but seldom. Between Ampthill and Lidlington, the path I traveled lay partly through highly cultivated fields, and over heights, which afforded a very fine view of the valley of the Ouse, and the surrounding country, which, in the summer season, rendered the walk extremely pleasant, but in the cold rains, and stormy days, and dark nights of

winter, most dreary and disagreeable. And yet, when I got there, among my warm-hearted friends, I almost forgot the toils of the week, and the disagreeableness of the journey. Those days are past, and perhaps I cannot record my impressions of the remembrance of them in language more appropriate, than in the following extracts from the Imperial Magazine, vol. iii, p. 919: “The path of no one is ever so barren a desert, but that there is at least some floweret to gladden him on his way, if it be but a wild one; and there is scarcely any man who would sacrifice the remembrance of some endearing scene, could it buy for him forgetfulness of every moment of misery he has endured. How many fond associations, how many tender recollections, how many sweet resting-places, in his journey through life, cannot the most destitute look back upon, and feel that the evil has not always overbalanced the good !” Yes, I may truly say,—

“ *In thought I often take my silent rounds,
And on that vision which is flown, I dwell
On images I loved—alas! how well!*”—

Now past; and but remember'd, like sweet sounds
Of yesterday. Yet in my breast I keep
Such recollections, painful though they seem,
And hours of joy retrace; till from my dream
I wake and find them not. Then I could weep
To think that time so soon each sweet devours;
To think life's first endearments fail so soon."

From Sonnets by Rev. W. L. Bowles.

At this period my week days, throughout the year, were days of almost unremitting toil. In the slumbers of the night I forgot the toils of the day, but waked in the morning to the stern realities of life again. Not once, if I remember correctly, during my six years' apprenticeship, did I find time to sit down in the store to read a chapter, or even a paragraph in a book of any kind; and only once, in all that period, did I find time to read a column in a newspaper.

My employer was no politician, and therefore took no paper, magazine, or periodical, whatever. Once on a time, however, he purchased a whole wagon-load of cast-off covers of the European Magazines, for wrapping paper, and many a time, when there were no customers present, did I cast my eyes over the advertisements, and other

curious matters printed on the covers of this popular monthly, and by these I learned a little of what was going on in the busy world around me. But my principal reading, at that time, was confined to books written by the Quakers. I had practiced reading aloud to my old instructress, and her amiable niece, at the time I learned to make straw braid, and thereby excelled boys of my age in the art of reading. This being the case, I was appointed reader for the family, on winter evenings, after the business of the day was pretty well over. In the course of a few years I read the Journals of Thomas Story, Job Scott, John Grattan, several volumes of practical piety, and several others. The dear people probably thought that by reading such books as these my mind would be "gathered up" into a purer region of thought, than by perusing the works of Addison, Johnson, Paley, and Blair. If this were the case they were mistaken. The reading of Quaker books did me no good, for they had neither the charms of eloquence, nor the fascinations of fiction, to recommend them, and the sub-

jects on which they treated were not such as interested my feelings. The Journal of Thomas Story was the most attractive of all ; but though I actually mastered a whole folio, (for that was the size of the book,) I cannot now remember at what period the author lived, or how he begins or ends his narrative. Had Rollin's Ancient History, Plutarch's Lives, Shaw's Travels in the Holy Land, The Spectator, The Rambler, or even Boswell's Life of Johnson, been put into my hand at that time, I should have learned something that would have been of use to me all through life.

As before stated, our market days were the busiest in the whole week, and we were often so crowded with customers, that we had not time to fold up and place on the shelves the goods that had previously been taken down ; and it was often actually the case, that one thing got mislaid while looking for another, and muslins, and cambrics, and silks, and satins, and stockings, and gloves, and shawls, and handkerchiefs, were heaped up in most inglorious confusion. A customer would sometimes want a particular

article just before leaving town,—“ All in a hurry, team waiting, no time to lose, be quick.” Unfortunately, the identical article cannot be found, and nothing else will do. The customer leaves, the merchant loses his profit, and the poor clerk has to take a lesson which is more easily pronounced than forgotten ; and all this for want of a little more help. Facts like these often occurred. It is a long time since they happened. But this I can say, though I cannot account for it, that for twenty years after I was released from that kind of servitude, if I felt more than usually unwell, or troubled in the day-time, I was sure to find myself, in the visions of the night, in the old store, in the same predicament as that above described.

At length my journeys to Lidlington, on a Sunday, were brought to a close. I had spent many happy hours there in company with my Christian friends, at their houses, and in the little chapel. In the family of Mr. Biggs, a young gentleman of the name of Millard boarded, who was a great proficient in music. He sang an excellent

bass, and with him, also, I spent many a pleasant hour, both in the house and in the chapel, singing the songs of Zion. In the family there were four sisters, the eldest of whom was named Fanny, one of the most amiable and most pious young ladies I ever knew. She died of consumption about the time of my leaving that place. She was a great lover of the doctrine of holiness, and was a bright example of the power of divine grace, in health, in sickness, in life, and in death. Her sister Sarah was a very intellectual young lady, a lover of literature and of eloquent preaching. Having lived awhile at Brighton, and in London, she was lavish in her praises of the great and good. The next sister was named Elizabeth, and was about as perfect a specimen of good nature as I ever knew. Hannah, the youngest of the four, was a bright, intelligent-looking girl, but at that time made no profession of religion. The parents were of that class who will always command respect, both from the Church and from the world. Mr. Millard not only loved the music composed by others, but

probably thought that others would like that which was composed by himself. He therefore published a small volume of tunes of his own composing; but either for want of discernment in the public, or of merit in the compositions, the tunes never became popular. In the township of Lidlington lived a poor woman, a member of the Methodist Society, who, though she could read her Bible, had never been taught to write. She had a son, who taught an academy near London, who contributed twenty shillings sterling per month toward the support of his aged parent. This sum he inclosed in a letter, in a one-pound note, directed to my care, at Ampthill. The letter, with its precious contents, I used to carry to Lidlington, read it to the receiver, and write an answer to the donor. This monthly labor was of service to me, it improved me in penmanship and composition; and if I got no other reward for my services but the thanks of the parties, I had the credit of being the best letter writer, in their estimation at least, Mrs. Mann ever employed.

CHAPTER IX.

METHODISM IN AMPHILL.

WHEN, and by whom, Methodism was introduced into Ampthill, is not a matter of such remote and uncertain date as to be lost in impenetrable obscurity. I believe that I was the first resident who bore the name in that place, and Elizabeth Cook was the second—but I was an apprentice, and she was a servant girl. It is probable, however, that though I did nothing to favor or accelerate such an event, she might have been instrumental in promoting it. There were living at that time, within two or three miles of Ampthill, two wealthy farmers, Mr. William Baker, of Houghton Conquest, and Mr. John Bennett,^{*} of Flit-

* Mr. Bennett was from Tempsford, near Bedford. His father was a tenant of Sir Gilly Payne, and was one of the most useful farmers in the country. Of his conversion, and of the introduction of Methodism into Tempsford, through his instrumentality, a most interesting account is given in the London Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for 1841.

wick. At the house of Mr. Baker the preachers on the Bedford circuit held meeting once a fortnight, on a Tuesday evening. In the course of three years I attended three of those meetings. On one occasion I heard Mr. Crickett; at another time, Mr. France; and the last time, Mr. Pearson.

There was no preaching at Flitwick; but Mr. Bennett, and his brother-in-law, Mr. Inskip, having recently come from the vicinity of Bedford, where there were many Methodists, and being themselves zealous friends of the cause, were probably the first persons that moved in the business. The preachers on the Bedford circuit, at that time, were the Revs. John Brownell, Henry B. Cheverton, Wm. Theobald, and Archibald McLaughlin. The first of these had been a missionary in the West Indies. My recollection of Mr. Brownell is but faint, having heard him only twice. In the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, for 1823, there is an interesting memoir of him. He is there styled "a very excellent man, and useful minister of Jesus Christ." "When about nine years of age he lost his sight by the

small pox, and continued three years totally blind. His father then dreamed, one night, that if he would take his son to a certain well in the neighborhood, and wash his eyes in the water of that well, his sight would be restored. The father did so, and after repeated ablutions, the son recovered his sight. Soon after Mr. Brownell's conversion he began to exhort, then to preach, and in the year 1795 sailed as a missionary to the West Indies, and after laboring there, amid violent persecutions, but with great success, for eleven years, he returned to his native country in 1806, and sustained the responsibilities of a traveling minister until the year 1820, when he ceased to travel, and the next year he ended his life and labors, at Newark upon Trent, in the fifty-first year of his age." By his looks I should have judged him to be over sixty years old. The missionary work must have injured his constitution very much to make him look so old.

Of Mr. Theobald, and of Mr. McLaughlin, I have very slight recollection, but of Mr. Cheverton, who, by some arrangement of

the itinerancy, was appointed to preach to us at Ampthill, once in a fortnight, on Sabbath evenings, I have a more distinct remembrance. He had a slight impediment in his speech, which seemed to give interest to his remarks, as it obliged him to labor with greater earnestness than, perhaps, he otherwise would have done. I have forgotten most of the sermons which I heard him preach, and nearly all the texts ; but there was one subject which, from the peculiarly solemn manner of his handling it, I shall not soon forget. It was preached on a Sunday evening, to a very crowded and attentive audience, from the words of St. Paul, Rom. vi, 23 : “ *The wages of sin is death.*”

Our local preachers were John Armstrong, a farmer by occupation, and a plain, pious, humble Christian, but not very gifted as a preacher ; William Yates, a farmer also, equally plain, and equally pious, but much more gifted ; and John Goss, a shoemaker, and by nature, I should think, as good a poet as Robert Bloomfield ; John Curtiss also, a lace-dealer, one of the best local preachers with whom I was then acquainted.

On one occasion he took for his text, Psalm lxvi, 16, and preached his own experience, which, to me, was very entertaining and profitable. He lived at Wootton, near Bedford, and as he often went to London, in the line of his business, he gathered together some of the best second-hand books that ever graced a preacher's library. When Lord Sidmouth's bill, for the suppression of what the Church considered unordained and unauthorized preachers, was brought into parliament, Mr. Curtiss took a very active part in obtaining signatures to petitions against the bill. These petitions were drawn up in legal form on sheets of parchment about three feet wide and four feet long, beautifully engrossed, and addressed "To the lords spiritual and temporal" of the British realm. The number of signatures to the petitions was almost incredible, and astonished their lordships beyond measure. The arguments brought forward against the bill were effective, and the bill was lost. The particulars respecting this bill, together with the bill itself, and its fate, including an abstract of the proceed-

ings in the house of lords, when Lord Sidmouth called for the second reading, and the speeches of many noble lords against it, may be seen in the London Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for 1811. The whole number of petitions received was six hundred and twenty-nine, one of which was signed by four hundred persons; and if this might be regarded as the average, then, as Lord Stanhope said, "if the bill were persisted in, the petitions against it must be counted by millions instead of thousands." This was the only instance that ever occurred in which I felt it to be my duty and privilege to sign a petition to the British legislature, for redress of grievances, or against oppression. But I was indebted to the vigilance and activity of Mr. Curtiss for the opportunity. He mounted his horse and rode through the country like an "express," and wherever he found a Methodist, or a Protestant dissenter, whose signature he was likely to obtain, he presented the petition.

The Episcopalians in Ampthill had probably held undisputed possession of the

place from the time of Henry VIII. till the followers of George Fox obtained a footing there. When and how this happened I never learned. The Baptists at Malden, in 1794, had for their minister a person of the same name as my father, but whether he was a near relative of the family I cannot say. But from what I knew of the state of religion, from 1806 to 1811, in and about Ampthill, I think I may safely assert that there was not one conversion among all these denominations, unless among the Baptists at Malden, in all that time. The Episcopilians heard a sermon and said their prayers regularly once a week, and sometimes twice, and that was about all they did to build up the cause of Christ. The Quakers assembled together, in their quiet way, twice on Sabbath, once on a Thursday, and at their regular monthly and quarterly meetings, but I heard of no conversions among them. The Baptist minister preached good sermons, but there were no prayer-meetings among the people, and no public baptisms that I ever saw. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the Methodist

ministers, who rode through the place, should inquire of their friends, Baker and Bennett, if nothing could be done for Ampthill ; and I should not wonder if the revelations of eternity should bring to light a fact similar to that recorded of the little maid who waited on Naaman's wife, which terminated in the cure of Naaman. That little Israelitish maid, as she waited on her mistress, said, "Would God my master were with the prophet that is in Samaria ; he would recover him of his leprosy !" And it is possible that Elizabeth Cook might say, in her heart at least, "I wish my mistress were a Methodist." Be that as it may, one thing is certain,—the good old lady sold one of her houses to the Methodists, probably to Messrs. Baker and Bennett ; and that the said house was, shortly after, converted into a Methodist chapel, and dedicated to the service of Almighty God. In this not very elegant, but quite comfortable place, the Rev. Thomas Doughty, of Kettering, preached the first sermon from the words of Christ, Matthew xviii, 20 : "Where two or three are gathered together in my name,

there am I in the midst of them." I do not remember his introduction to the words of the text, but I well recollect that when he was speaking of the presence of Christ with his people, he remarked: "As the sun in the midst of the firmament,—as a father among his children,—as a teacher among his scholars,—and as a physician among his patients, so is Christ in the assembly of his saints." The sermon in the evening was by the Rev. Frederick Calder, of St. Neots. I do not remember the text, or any particular part of the sermon, but my impression was, that, to use an English phrase, he was "a capital preacher." But greatly as I was delighted with the preaching, I was in a certain sense still more so with the singing. The singers were from Bedford, and in the afternoon they sang one of Leach's tunes, called "*Tabernacle*." This tune, in my humble opinion, is one of the best congregational tunes in all his collection, and being sung in the very best style, made a most delightful impression on my feelings. In the evening they sung an anthem, by the same author, called "*CANAAN*,"—a most

charming piece, and performed in a style superior to anything I had ever heard before. The contrast between this kind of singing, and nearly all other kinds with which I was acquainted, was great indeed. In this and several other respects the change was almost as great as that described by the prophet: “For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron:— thou shalt call thy walls salvation and thy gates praise.” Isaiah lx, 17, 18. I had been with the Quakers in their silent meetings; with the Baptists where a powerful tenor voice took the lead, with very few sopranos to aid in the same; and with the Episcopalians, where there was a flock but “no kind shepherd near,” to look after the lambs, or to seek those that had gone astray; but in none of these pastures could I find that spiritual refreshment which I desired: my resolution, therefore, on the day of dedication, was like that of Ruth: “This people shall be my people, and their God my God.”

Regular preaching having now been es-

tablished among us, it was thought that we must open a Sabbath school. But who was to be the superintendent? the librarian? the secretary? and who was to draw up the constitution, and the by-laws, by which we were to be governed? These important items we never thought of. We began our Sabbath school without a constitution, without a library, and without officers. The first Sabbath it fell to my lot to open the school. This I did by singing and prayer. I then read a chapter in the Bible, and endeavored to explain such parts of it as were not "hard to be understood." We then organized as well as we could, and went to work, without a Question-book, Catechism, or any other help, but the Hymn-book and Bible. William Moody, Elizabeth Cook, and myself, were the officers *pro tem.*, and Nancy Deverell, Sarah Roberts, and Sarah Harrison, were our female teachers. But as our school increased, Providence sent to our aid help from abroad. Several Methodists living in the neighborhood of Ampt-hill, settled in the place. These not only joined the society, but cast in their lot with

us as teachers in the Sabbath-school. By-and-by James Downing, a blind man, and a local preacher, and his wife, and Mr. James, another local preacher, and his wife, were added to the number, and it was not long before the work of the Lord began to revive. Souls were converted and the society increased, so that in two years from the dedication of the first chapel, a new one, much larger, was erected in another part of the town, and in less than three years more Ampthill became the head of a circuit.

At the time that the second chapel was built, our circuit preachers were the Rev. Messrs. Isaac Bradnack, Isaac Phœnix, Joseph Gostick, Richard Eland, and Thomas Hall. Mr. Bradnack had been a missionary in the West Indies, and was remarkably zealous in his endeavors to spread Scriptural Christianity throughout the land. He was tall and athletic, but not corpulent; walked remarkably erect, with a firm step, and an air like a British officer, and spoke and acted like a commander-in-chief. When he spoke in public, a power attended

his word that made the sinner tremble ; but to the young and weak, and to the penitent, he was as kind and as gentle as a father. Mr. Phœnix was from the Emerald Isle. He had some of the eccentricities, and a good share of the generosity, of the true-hearted Irishman ; but he was a good preacher, mighty in prayer, diligent in his work, and always acceptable. Mr. Gostick was decidedly of English origin. I should think that his literary advantages, in early life, were very limited, for his pronunciation, not to say of Scripture names, but of common words, was very incorrect. But he was an ingenious and instructive preacher, and a most pleasant companion—easy, affable, cheerful, and communicative. His dress was that of a preacher, but his gait would lead the observer to conclude that he had held the plow and swung the scythe in other days. Mr. Eland was the exact counterpart of Mr. Gostick. To see him on a Sunday morning, in the summer season, as he walked to the house of God, dressed in a suit of rich black broadcloth, with breeches buttoned at the knee and fastened

with a buckle, and black silk stockings and brightly-polished shoes, walking slowly and gracefully along in meditative mood, as if intent on holy things, one might suppose that he had studied Cowper's description of a preacher to good effect, or that he had been brought up in London, or Cambridge, or Oxford, and that he wished to make Methodism appear respectable in the eyes of the world. His sermons were methodical, and his manners impressive; but his pronunciation of certain words was not according to Walker. Mr. Hall was different from them all in almost every respect. He preached, and talked, and acted like a practical Yorkshireman—as if he had been brought up in a region of steam-engines and rail-roads. He formed the local preachers, exhorters, and class-leaders into an association, gave them their lessons, and heard them recite. His object seemed to be to have a class of laborers that needed not to be ashamed when they undertook to instruct others in the way of salvation. But I am afraid his labors were not attended with the desired success, there was such a

wide difference in the age and capacity of his pupils. They were not entirely lost on all of us, however, and I think I may say they were of special benefit to me: they showed me my deficiencies, they set me to thinking, and drove me to study.

CHAPTER X.

LICENSED TO PREACH.

THE erection of a new Methodist chapel in Ampthill not only marks an era in the history of Methodism in that part of the Bedford circuit, but a very considerable change also in my temporal and spiritual affairs. I had spent six years as an apprentice, and one year as a clerk, in the family of a pious Quaker. I had endeavored to serve my employers faithfully, and, as a token of the estimation in which my services were regarded, they made me a present of a handsome silver watch. Under these circumstances, the ticking of this little chronometer, at the head of my bed, sounded very pleasantly, as I laid me down to rest at night, after the toils of the day. I had for some time wished to change my situation, from the business of a general shopkeeper, to that of a linen and woolen draper, silk mercer, &c., and from the silence of a Quaker family to the social

enjoyments of a more lively and cheerful circle. Directly opposite to the old store was a very neat one of the kind referred to, kept by a first-rate merchant, a great lover of music, and in principle a Methodist. He had but recently taken the store, was doing a flourishing business, and was willing to give me employment. So I took up my abode in his family, and turned my hand to a new branch of business. I had had some little experience in handling silks and muslins, or I should not have been qualified to occupy the place of first clerk in a dry goods store. This change in my employment was very agreeable. But the change, in other respects, was, if possible, still more so. Instead of having to go three miles on a Sabbath-day to meeting, I could now worship with my own people, in a commodious chapel, within a few minutes' walk from my home. My employer had a good collection of books, and among them a fine copy of the Imperial Encyclopedia. This was the very work I needed. My school-boy days were over, and nearly all the learning that I had acquired during their short continuance

might be comprehended in three words, viz., *reading*, *writing*, and *arithmetic*. The interval between that period and the commencement of my apprenticeship had been diligently improved, without a master, in the same branches of useful knowledge. But during my apprenticeship, and the year following, all my reading, with very little exception, amounted to nothing. My thirst for knowledge was great, and I soon found the means of allaying it in the perusal of such books as tended to my real and lasting benefit; and if, in trying to improve my own mind, I neglected the interests of my employer, I ask pardon, both of God and man. I may have erred in some things, but if I did, it was through ignorance, and not willfully. My employer, as I said before, was a great lover of music; and as, in his youth, he had become familiar with Leach's Anthems, nothing would answer his purpose but a copy of that work for our evening exercises. At that time a young doctor settled in Ampthill. He was the best flute-player I had ever heard; and as I had a slight knowledge of the use of that

instrument, and a great desire for improvement in the art of playing it, I put myself under his tuition, not as a teacher, but as a friend. He was a great admirer of Wragg's Duetts, and under his instruction I was soon able to accompany him in those delightful exercises. This being accomplished, we soon formed ourselves into a trio. The doctor, of course, played the first flute, and I the second. Mr. Shaw purchased a new violincello, and we took up Leach's Anthems; and if we had only had two female voices, and one good bass, to join us, we should have been the best choir in Ampthill.

But though the "concord of sweet sounds" was exceedingly pleasant, there was another subject which took deeper hold of my feelings than even music. My worthy superintendent, the Rev. Isaac Bradnack, labored under an impression that the Lord had called me to preach. This he intimated to me one pleasant evening, as we were walking together after preaching, in as gentle and delicate a manner as the nature of the case would admit. He remarked as follows: "When I heard you speak in love-feast, a

few Sabbaths since, I thought within myself, ‘The Lord has something for that young man to do: if he knows it, he ought to be encouraged; and if he does not, some one ought to tell him of it.’” On hearing this I was greatly surprised, for nothing was further from my thoughts when speaking at the love-feast than endeavoring to make such an impression upon Mr. Bradnack’s mind. I thought, and that very justly, that for such an important work as preaching the gospel I was altogether incompetent and unfit; and when he proposed that I should go and fill an appointment at a distant village, I peremptorily refused. This, however, did not satisfy Mr. B., and when he came round again he beset me, and prevailed on me to go to Aspley, and “explain a verse” in the best manner I could, or as the Lord might enable me. In compliance, therefore, with his urgent request, on Sunday morning, July 11, 1813, I started on foot and alone, and walked about seven miles to the place of appointment. The meeting was in a barn, and when I raised myself up in the

pulpit to give out the first hymn, my legs trembled, my head began to swim, and in my fright I was actually afraid, if I leaned against the pulpit, that it would fall on the people. This paroxysm did not last long. The people sung the hymn, I prayed, and gave out another hymn, after which I boldly read the verse, Acts iii, 19, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." From this plain passage of holy writ I took occasion to show the nature, the necessity, and the blessed consequences of that repentance which is unto life, and which needeth not to be repented of. In the afternoon I spoke from Rev. xxii, 14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." How such a weak, ignorant, bashful, diffident youth, could ever make up his mind to attempt to preach, is still matter of astonishment; but the truth is, I was from a child, and am still, to some extent, "easy to be entreated." A young convert

persuaded me first to open my mouth in prayer; an aged woman induced me to make my first public attempt in a prayer meeting; and it was in compliance with the urgent request of my superintendent, that I ventured to take a text, and expound the word of God. My first attempt was *original* in every respect, from beginning to end. For my second I cannot claim the same degree of credit. I had heard that text preached from by one of the circuit preachers, and very innocently thought that I might make use of some of his leading ideas. I did so. The preacher heard that I had taken his text, which probably he had used more than once, and wished to use again. He, therefore, very naturally inquired how I treated the subject. Some one told him, and this brought me out. I was reproved, and took good care how I worked with that man's tools another time. I mention this matter as a warning to others, and in token of my thankfulness to the preacher, who, hearing this of me, came to me himself to know if it were so. Many others may have fallen into the same snare;

but that does not justify me, and I would have all others to be careful in this matter.

After my first endeavor to preach, the generous people invited me to come again, and two or three kind-hearted and zealous young men walked part of the way home with me, and encouraged me to persevere. I soon found that there was plenty to do for him who was willing to work. The superintendent, without my knowledge or consent, put the initials of my name on the Local Preachers' Plan, and gave me plenty of appointments, some at the distance of three, five, seven, and even ten miles from my residence. In the course of six months I filled appointments at nearly all the places on the Plan, after which my name was regularly inserted among the local preachers on the Bedford and Ampthill circuit. With the exception of two or three times, I always performed my journeys on foot, and alone. When the weather was fair, and the walking good, there was nothing painful or unpleasant in the duty of a local preacher; but in the fall, winter, and spring, when the weather was wet and cold, and the roads

almost impassable, it was not very agreeable to flesh and blood. But it was local preachers' fare. I had voluntarily consented to take up the cross. I had set my hand to the plow, and it always appeared to me that if I looked back I was not fit for the kingdom. Still it was a cross, in stormy weather, to leave the Sunday-school, and the preaching, and my seat in the choir, at home, and walk several miles through the rain, and miry roads, and meadows all afloat, as was sometimes the case, to preach to a few poor people, in a country village, and in a cold room, and then return again at night by the same way. Yes, it was a cross, but through grace divine I bore it, though I never received so much as a dollar in money, or even a pair of gloves, for all the services that I rendered the Church in that way. Besides, I paid my pew-rent, class money, and yearly subscriptions, all the time that I was a local preacher on the Bedford and Ampthill circuits, which was two years and six months.

The time having arrived for Messrs. Bradnack, Phoenix, Gostick, Eland, and

Hall to leave, and go to other fields of labor, it was judged best to divide the circuit into two, and to constitute Bedford the head of one, and Ampthill that of the other. From this time, instead of five preachers, we had only two, viz., Rev. Hugh Ransom and Thomas Armet, for the year 1814; and for the years 1815 and 1816, Mr. Ransom and Mr. Hague. Mr. Ransom was a Welchman by birth. He was probably forty-five years of age, had filled several important stations in the Connection with great acceptability, and was regarded as a very good preacher. But he was not a Bradnack; at least he was not such to me. He had a very large library, but he never so much as offered to lend me a single volume, nor asked me what books I read, or a single question in history, theology, or science. I relished his preaching, but his manners I did not like, and yet I have no doubt he was a good man. Mr. Armet was a young man, had not been long in the ministry, and looked as if he had been well fed on his last circuit. Of his piety I have no doubt; but though his preaching was acceptable to the people, it

was not instructive, or even entertaining, to me. Mr. Hague was a young man of deep piety, and of an excellent spirit. There was not, then, that clamor for brilliant talents that there is now, and it was well that there was not, for if there had been, I fear that poor Mr. Hague would not have passed the ordeal ; and yet, in the estimation of the truly pious, he stood very high. He had been brought up in the manufacturing district on the borders of Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Yorkshire, among lively Methodists. His first appointment was Ampthill circuit, a great way from Yorkshire, and the good man thought that "so far south there was no Methodism." But when he saw the Methodist chapel in Ampthill, with an ascent of twenty steps to go up to it; and when he entered it, and saw a high pulpit, a large congregation, and a large choir of singers, with instruments of music, "to praise the Lord withal," his courage failed him ; and when he had proceeded a little way in his sermon, his memory and his strength forsook him, he turned pale, fainted, and fell back in the

pulpit. In a short time, however, he recovered his strength and his spirits, and finished his discourse in a satisfactory manner.

Some faint idea of the toils of a local preacher may be obtained from the following items, which I have copied from my journal of that date: “*Sunday, Sept. 17, 1815.* This morning I heard Mr. Ransom from Rev. ii, 5, ‘Remember from whence thou art fallen,’ &c. It was a very able and very seasonable discourse. After dinner I walked to Williamsted, five miles, and preached afternoon and evening, and then walked home alone. *Sunday, Dec. 24.* In company with W. M., E. M., and D. G., I walked to Williamsted again, and preached in the afternoon from Luke x, 42, ‘One thing is needful.’ In the evening we all went to Cople, near Bedford, and heard Mr. Wiles, an aged local preacher, from the city. He preached from Psalm iv, 3, ‘The Lord hath set apart the godly for himself.’ It being Christmas eve we stayed all night. According to custom, the Episcopal bell-ring-ers treated their neighbors with a midnight peal, which, being rather unexpected by us,

sounded very pleasantly. The next forenoon we had a prayer meeting at the house where we stayed. An old gentleman present, who had been brought up an Episcopalian, and found it difficult to lay aside the form altogether, began to repeat a prayer which he had committed to memory; but memory failing him, he stopped suddenly in the middle, and after a short pause began again; but meeting with the same difficulty, he exclaimed, ‘That’s not it.’ In a little while, however, his recollection served him, and he finished his prayer. After this we walked to Houghton, four miles, where I preached a Christmas sermon; we then walked to Bedford, six miles, and heard the Rev. Mr. Dean; and then we all walked home to Ampthill, eight miles more, that night. *Sunday, January 7, 1816.* Mr. Ransom being taken very ill, quite suddenly, it fell to my lot to preach three times at Ampthill. In the evening, before preaching, a circumstance occurred which I think it may be proper to relate. I had gone into my bed-room, in the third story of the house, without a light,

for the purpose of secret prayer. While I was there, the hired girl came into the adjoining room with a lighted candle. I heard her go down stairs, and wondered that she did not take the light with her. But as I left my chamber, and was passing the room where the girl had been with the light, I perceived that she must have let fall a spark from the lighted candle upon some cotton goods, which, by the time I reached the door, were all in a blaze, and but for the circumstance of my being in the adjoining room without a light, and passing that way just when I did, the whole of that part of the building would have been on fire beyond the possibility of extinguishing it. Thus, the sickness of Mr. Ransom obliged me to preach. A sense of my own unfitness drove me to ‘seek relief in prayer.’ In doing this I needed no light. The girl’s carelessness, in letting a spark fall where it did, occasioned the mischief; but providentially I was the means of preventing its spreading.”

Our little flock in Ampthill had received a valuable addition by the transfer of seve-

ral Methodist families from other places. But before we had long enjoyed their company and labors, an inscrutable Providence saw fit to remove three individuals of them to a better world. The loss of these persons was severely felt by the society, as well as by their immediate friends. But infinite wisdom cannot err, and it behooves us to say, submissively, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" One of these dear friends was a local preacher, one was a class-leader, and the other was a poor, but deeply pious female.

CHAPTER XI.

FAREWELL TO AMPHILL AND BEDFORD CIRCUITS.

“ Dear bowers, must I leave you and bid you adieu,
And pay my devotions in parts that are new?”

THE Bedford circuit preachers were the first of that class and order of ministers I ever heard. As long ago as the year 1797, I well remember the names and persons of Messrs. Stanley and Harper, who were then stationed on that extensive circuit. I was present at the dedication of the first Methodist chapel at Leighton Buzzard, in 1804, and heard the Rev. Joseph Benson preach an eloquent sermon from 1 Cor. iii, 11–15; and at the opening of a new chapel in Luton, in 1815, where I heard the same divine again from the same text. I was present at Clophill when Mr. Bradnack preached his first sermon in that village under the shade of a great tree, and at the dedication of the little chapel, which was built on a piece of ground given by “old Frank Reed,” as he was vulgarly called, and was awaken-

ed by the first sermon preached by Mr. Bradnack under the tree. At the opening of this little chapel, I heard for the first and last time the celebrated Samuel Bradburn ; but, alas ! he was then in his wane and almost gone. It was in the Bedford chapel that I preached my trial sermon before Mr. Bradnack, who, if I had consented, would have taken my name to conference and recommended me as a missionary to the West Indies. Perhaps I should have consented, but a fit of sickness set in just at that time and frustrated all our plans. Since that how often have I thought of the words of the prophet : “ O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself : it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.” Jer. x, 23. This text I had heard Mr. Eland preach from in the year 1813.

The time at length arrived for me to bid a final farewell to the place where I had spent nearly ten years of my life, and to scenes which at first were new and strange, but which now were not only familiar but pleasant. A great change had taken place in the commercial world since peace had

been proclaimed between England, and France, and America. My employer had taken an apprentice, who had by this time become familiar with the business, and therefore my services were no longer necessary. I had spent nearly three years in Mr. Shaw's family, and formed an agreeable acquaintance with some of the intimate friends of the family, with a number of preachers, both itinerant and local, and a large circle of friends in the country places where I used to preach, to whom I had become warmly attached. But these ties must be severed; and, accordingly, on Monday evening, May 6, 1816, I preached my farewell sermon in Ampthill chapel, from Heb. xiii, 8: "Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, and to-day, and forever." There were many persons present of our society, and several of other denominations, to all of whom I said, "*Farewell.*" The next day (May 7) I went to London, to live with a Mr. Roper, grocer, High-street, borough of Southwark. But if the grocery business was disagreeable in the country, it was not less so in London; so, after trying it one

week, I gave it up at once and forever. My late employer, Mr. Shaw, hearing of my disappointment in London, kindly used his influence in procuring me another situation. This was at Rugby, in Warwickshire, where was a noted school, kept at that time by Dr. Wool, and afterward by Dr. Arnold, well known in this country by his works, which have been published since his death. My employer at Rugby was an Episcopalian, and as high and as stiff in his notions concerning the supremacy of the English Church as some who are called Puseyites are at this day. He kept a large dry-goods store, wholesale and retail, and employed three clerks beside myself. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. V., six children, three hired girls, and a footman to wait on the table. Everything was in aristocratic order, which was not very agreeable to my republican principles. I was permitted to worship with my own people, but it was a matter of toleration, not approved of by my employer. I might have endured this for a few years if the following untoward circumstances had not occurred. In the village

of Lilburn, near Rugby, lived a Mr. Thomas Tansur, a zealous Methodist, whose sister was dangerously sick. The young woman had not experienced religion, and being, as was supposed, near death, her brother felt concerned for her soul, and wished me to go and pray with her. I complied with his request, and while there the doctor came in, appeared to be highly offended at our intrusion, and ordered us to leave the room. A soft answer might have turned away the doctor's wrath, but the grievous words of the incensed brother stirred up his anger; and, not satisfied with this demonstration of his superiority, he made an offensive representation of the matter to my employer. Mr. V. pretended that it was a disgrace for a respectable young man like me to associate with the Methodists. At this I also was offended, and gave him notice that in three months from that time, if he remained of the same opinion, and I continued of the same mind as I was then in, I would seek employment elsewhere.

While I was at Rugby I made a local preacher's visit to Lutterworth, in Leices-

tershire. More than four hundred years had rolled away since Wiclid, the morning-star of the Reformation, had exercised his ministry there, but the fame of his good deeds had not perished with the lapse of years. The church in which he preached is a handsome structure, with a lofty spire. It had been beautified, about sixty years before I visited the place, with new pavements and pews ; but the pulpit was left standing, in honor of the learned and pious reformer. Over the pulpit hung a full-length portrait of the first English translator of the Bible, and in the vestry-room was to be seen the gown in which he preached. Many persons had begged, or stolen, a piece of his gown, perhaps without coveting a portion of his spirit. When I was there, no more of this sacred relic was to be had ; but it mattered not, as every Englishman now may have what is infinitely better, the whole Bible, and as much of the spirit of the translator as he may need. Wiclid died in Lutterworth, and was buried in peace ; but the persecuting spirit of Popery, about forty years afterward, in conformity with a de-

cree of the council of Constance, says Fox, “dugged up his body, burned his bones, and drowned his ashes in the brook Swift.” The Swift is a small brook that runs into the Avon, the Avon empties itself into the Severn, the Severn into the Narrow Sea, or estuary at Bristol, and the Narrow Sea into the main ocean ; and if, as the martyrologist supposes, the ashes of Wiclif were carried thus far, then, as he asserts, “they are an emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all over the world.” To cross that brook into which the ashes of the martyr were cast, to visit the church in which he preached, and to give a word of exhortation in the place where he died, though there may be no particular honor attached to these things, certainly gave me pleasure at the time, and the recollection thereof gives me satisfaction even now.

My employer at Rugby had a partnership in a dry-goods store at Banbury, in Oxfordshire, and on special occasions one of the clerks was sent to assist the partner. In the month of July, 1816, it was my lot to attend to this business. The particular

object of my journey to Banbury being accomplished, and not being obliged to return to Rugby within a day or two, I obtained leave of the partner of my employer to visit my brother at Hardwick, near Aylesbury; and as it would not be much out of my way to call at the famous city of Oxford, I determined, if I went on foot, I would visit that ancient seat of learning. On the morning of July 3d I started early, and on my way overtook a plain-looking man, who asked me whither I was going. I answered, "To Oxford." "So," said he, "you are going to see the parson manufactory." "Yes," said I, "I want to see the university." He seemed to be so well pleased with my appearance, or discourse, or inquiries, that he invited me to his house and gave me dinner and tea, and in the interval took me to see the colleges. As there are more than twenty of these magnificent establishments, and I could not visit all, I preferred seeing, in the first place, Lincoln College, on Wesley's account, Pembroke on Dr. Johnson's, Brazen Nose, to see why it was so called, and New College, on account

of its reputed beauty. With all these, the Radcliffe Library, the Clarendon Press, and with the general appearance of the city—the most beautiful I ever saw, or expect to see on earth—I was greatly delighted, as well as with the urbanity of the stranger who showed me all these things. Classically speaking, he belonged to the order of St. Crispin ; but he was well informed, and as kind as he was intelligent. The weather was extremely fine, mildly warm, and beautifully bright. The streets were remarkably clean, the venerable elms in St. Giles' street were magnificent specimens of that order of ligneous plants. The buildings were splendid, and the paintings in glass, in New College, the most exquisite I ever beheld. O ! if the piety of the citizens, and of the university, were equal to the beauty of the place, I think there could not be a more desirable spot on earth ! Leaving Oxford, I took coach for Thame, (the source of the river Thames,) stopped all night at a public house, and the next day visited my brother at Hardwick. The day following I returned to Banbury, and on Saturday to Rugby.

On the 14th of August I resigned my situation at Mr. V.'s, in Rugby. The Lord had called me to preach, as I had every reason to believe. The Methodists claimed me, and did not wish to give me up, and I did not want to leave them. Mr. V. probably thought it degrading to him to have in his employ one that bore the name and designation of a Methodist local preacher, especially in a place where the claims and assumptions of the Church ran as high as at Oxford. In the evening of the same day that I left Rugby, I preached at Hillmorton to a crowded audience. The friends sympathized with me, and treated me kindly for the gospel's sake. Having now no certain dwelling-place, my father dead and my mother a widow, at a time when clerks were more numerous than places, on account of the stagnation of trade and commerce that prevailed all through the country, I felt my situation to be lonely in the extreme; yet, as I had acted according to the dictates of my conscience, I cast myself upon the providence of God, and went forward, hardly knowing which way to direct

my steps. Just at that time the new Methodist chapel at Leicester was to be dedicated, and not knowing what might turn up if I went there, I called on my friend Tansur, at Lilburn, and invited him to accompany me thither. He very readily consented, and we walked together to the place. We arrived before sundown, and took up our lodgings at a tavern. After tea we took a walk to see the chapel. While there, a plain-looking man, whom I took to be a Methodist local preacher, attracted my attention. I introduced myself to him, and found that I was not mistaken in my conjecture ; and, in the course of our conversation, I inquired of him if he knew of a situation that would suit me as clerk in a dry-goods store. He had lately come from Derby, and said that he knew of a situation that was vacant, which perhaps I might, by writing to the gentleman who kept the store, possibly obtain. I therefore wrote immediately, and received a favorable answer while I was at Leicester.

The new chapel was opened for divine service on Friday, August 16th, with appro-

priate exercises, and an eloquent sermon by the Rev. R. Watson, from the words of Solomon, 2 Chron. vi, 41, 42. I had heard great things of Mr. Watson, and I was not in the least disappointed, except for the better. His tall and erect form, his fine forehead and brilliant eye, his dignified and solemn manner, graceful action, and musical intonations of voice; his lofty conceptions, beautiful imagery, delightful illustrations, and impressive enunciations of divine truth, made a deep and lasting impression upon my mind. In the afternoon Mr. Bunting (now Dr. Bunting) preached from Heb. iv, 14. His person, voice, and manner, were all exceedingly *neat*; and if it would not be degrading to the subject, I would say that the framework of his sermon was as neat as a honeycomb, and the matter of it as sweet as honey. As a preacher, I should think he had fewer faults than most men, and less excellencies than some. In the evening Mr. (now Dr.) Newton preached in his usually eloquent manner. The Rev. Robert Hall was present, and I have often regretted that he did not preach on that

occasion. What he thought of the three then greatest preachers in the Methodist Connection I do not know. My own opinion, if I may use similitudes, is, that Mr. Watson on that occasion was the palm-tree, full of ripe dates ; Mr. Bunting was the choice vine, full of clusters, and not one wild grape among them ; while I would say of Mr. Newton, if I may use the words of Solomon, “As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so was my beloved (Newton) among the sons (of Wesley). I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my taste.” The dedication services were continued on the following Sabbath, when Messrs. Bunting, Lessey, and Burdsall were the preachers. The congregations on both days were very large, and the collections amounted to *three hundred pounds* sterling. While at Leicester, I formed an acquaintance with one who had been a member of the late Rev. Thomas Robinson’s congregation, and I went to view the church where that excellent man preached. In the chancel was a beautiful white marble tablet, erected to his memory, and an elo-

quent inscription, setting forth his excellencies as a preacher, a pastor, an author, and a Christian. In the same church, also, I heard Mr. Benson, successor of Mr. Robinson, preach an excellent sermon one evening while I remained there. My friend Tansur, who accompanied me to Leicester, left me, and returned to Lilburn, where he remained till his wife died. He came to this country in 1829. I was then stationed at the Duane-street church, in the city of New-York. On landing in New-York he went to the Book Room, in Crosby-street, and inquired for me, found out where I lived, came to see me, and seemed greatly rejoiced to meet with an old friend. He had become a preacher, but not liking well to run the hazard of a poor appointment in the traveling connection, he left the Methodists, and joined the Episcopalians under Bishop Doane, succeeded in obtaining a comfortable settlement somewhere in New-Jersey, where he labored a few years, and then died in the Lord. The Episcopal press spoke very highly of him, after his decease, as a man, a Christian, and a minister of the "True Succession."

CHAPTER XII.

TWO YEARS' RESIDENCE IN DERBY.

As before stated, I wrote to the gentleman in Derby who was in want of a clerk, and received an answer to my letter while I remained in Leicester. The answer was favorable, and in a few days more I obtained the situation. Leaving Leicester I took coach for Derby, and arrived in that ancient and goodly city toward the latter end of August, 1816. My employer, Mr. George Sowter, was a Methodist. His wife, also, was a member of the same Church. Mrs. S. kept a boarding-school for young ladies at Quarndon, a beautiful little village, three miles north of the city. My predecessor in Mr. Sowter's store was a young man of excellent business talents, but was drowned while bathing in the river Derwent on a Sunday morning. My associate in the store was an apprentice, a young lad of good business talents; but before the expiration of his time he fell into bad habits, and was dismissed with loss of character, and with-

out funds. After his dismissal my employer took another apprentice, a distant relative, of an excellent family, and one of the cleverest lads I ever knew,—very similar in his disposition and turn to Master John Rogers, of Ampthill, who was an apprentice to Mr. Shaw when I left that place. I have understood that both these young men succeeded so well in business as to become the successors of their employers in the same business, and in the same stores.

Derby is a place of considerable note, and I trust that a brief description of some of its more prominent features will be acceptable to my readers. All historians agree as to the antiquity of the place, but all are not so well agreed as to the origin of its name. Whether it was derived from the ancient Britons, the Romans, the Saxons, or the Normans, no one can tell. Tradition says that *Little Chester*, half a mile above Derby, was a Roman city, and that Derby was a gentleman's park, stocked with deer, and hence the name, *Deer-by*. History will have it that as the river is named *Derwent*, the town was called *Derby*, because it stands

by the river; while analogy would seem to say that the river derived its name from the town, because it *went by* it, and hence was called Derwent. The fact is, the city *stands by* the river, and the river *went by* the place before it was a city, and very properly is called *Derby*, and the other *Derwent*. Many things conspire to render Derby a pleasant place. The situation, an open valley, but not flat; the public roads, all good, except in bad weather; the soil, excellent, and in high cultivation; the air, pure and good; the water, soft and sweet; and the public buildings such as befit the place. The water of the river is raised by an engine at the bottom of St. Michael's-lane, and conveyed through a pipe into a reservoir at the top of the church, the distance of about one hundred yards, and the height of twelve. Thence, as from a grand artery, the water is conveyed by tubes under the pavement into almost every street. "Perhaps," says Hutton, in his history of the place, "this is the most useful church in Derby, though preached in but once a month."

In the city of Derby there are five Episcopal churches, all of Saxon origin, answering to so many parishes. Of these churches, *All Saints* is by far the most magnificent. "It stands," says Hutton, "as a prince among subjects—a giant among dwarfs. Viewed at a distance, in any attitude, the associated ideas of taste, grandeur, and beauty, fascinate the mind; the eye is captivated, and continually returns to its object, but never tires." This beautiful Gothic structure is one hundred and seventy-eight feet high, and tradition says that it was erected, in part, by the contributions of the young men and maidens of Derby, "which indicates that they were strangers to irreligion, poverty, and covetousness." I was once on the top of this noble tower, the view from which is extremely grand. But what pleased me better than the sight of this splendid piece of architecture, or the view from its top, was the sound of its ten bells, and of its musical chimes. Every Sabbath-day, three times, these chimes played the old one hundred and fourth Psalm tune; and on the day the Princess Charlotte was

buried, and business was suspended throughout the nation, these bells were muffled, and tolled the most solemn peal that I ever heard.

Derby, like many other ancient cities in England, is famous for the number of its charities, which, it is to be feared, have been either embezzled or grossly misapplied; for, as Hutton remarks, “Before a dying man disposes of that which belongs to his successor, he should consider whether he can deposit it in the hands of a perpetual trust, who will not want it themselves, and who will not slumber when a tenant wants it; and whether, instead of making a *saint* of himself, he is not making a *knaves* of another.”

In illustration of the foregoing remark, the same historian, in his description of St. Peter’s church, says, “Robert Liversage, a dyer, of Derby, founded a chapel in this church in 1530, and ordered divine service to be celebrated [in it] every Friday. Thirteen people, of either sex, were required to attend, each to be rewarded with a silver penny. The porches, like those of Bethes-

da, were crowded with people, who waited for the moving of the doors, as the others did for that of the waters. While the spiritual sergeant beat up for volunteers, at a penny advance, recruits would never be wanting. A sufficient congregation was not doubted, nor their quarreling for the money. The priest found his hearers in that disorder which his prayers could not rectify. They frequently fought, but not the good fight of faith, nor did ill-neighbourhood end with Friday. The hearer used to pay the preacher, but here the case was reversed. We learn that no scheme is so likely to fill a church as the silver penny; that good silver will draw more hearers than good sermons; that no devotion is valid that is bought with a price; and that a penny will make a hypocrite!"

In addition to the five Episcopal churches, Derby contained, in 1817, five or six for Dissenters, and one for Romanists. Hutton appears, by his writings, to have been an Episcopalian. He speaks of the first Methodist chapel, and of Mr. Wesley, thus: "The Methodists erected a meeting-house

in St. Michael's-lane, under that great divine *John Wesley*, who, differing in sentiments from the sons of the Church, covets not wealth, though all he possesses is not of more consequence than the small dust of the balance; but he covets more religion, though already possessed of more than half the bench of bishops."

Derby, in the days of Popery, was famous for religious houses, as they were then called. On the dissolution of these houses, and of the changes consequent thereupon, Hutton, in his facetious manner, thus speaks: "We have touched at six places, all sacred ground, set apart for holiness, famous for piety, expense, and miracle. But alas! how changed! St. Helen's is an orchard; the fruit of the monastery is changed into that of the apple-tree; and however the ground, in two hundred years, may have lost its sacred influence, yet this fruit is as finely flavored as if under the consecrating prayers of the monk. The spot where the assembly of the fair composed a nunnery, [Nuns' Green,] where the practice of the life was not the wish of the heart, where the passions of the mind

were suspended, and the designs of nature inverted, is now laid in silence, except the noise of the winds blowing above, and the beasts cropping the grass below. The place is now an open field, and plenty smiles where beauty wept."

The principal manufactures in Derby are in cotton, silk, and porcelain. The silk *mill*, as it is called, is not for *grinding* silk, but *winding* it on bobbins, and preparing it for the weavers. This ponderous building, erected by John Lombe, stands upon huge piles of oak, from sixteen to twenty feet long, driven close to each other with an engine made for the purpose, on an island, or rather swamp, in the river Derwent. Over this solid mass of timber is laid a foundation of stone, and on this is erected a building containing eight apartments and four hundred and sixty-eight windows.

In the course of his history, Mr. Hutton gives the following very curious account of his own ancestry: "In the year 1647, a regiment of troopers in the parliament's service, marching over St. Mary's Bridge, in their way to Nottingham, observed a girl

lading water into her pail, while standing upon a log in the edge of the river. Some soldierly jokes ensued, when one of them dismounted and threw a large stone, with a design to splash her. But not being as well versed in directing a stone as a bullet, he missed his aim and broke her head. Alarmed at the result, the soldier changed his position to avoid the consequences. Thus the man who had boldly faced an enemy in the field, fled at the sight and cries of an injured and helpless female. The girl ran home to her mother covered with blood from the wound inflicted by the stone. The unknown consequences of this adventure hung upon the trooper's mind. He served in the regiment eleven years, and on his discharge settled at Derby, followed his occupation, courted and married a young woman. In the course of their conversation he proved to be the man who cast the stone, and she the woman who was wounded by it. They lived in Bridgegate, in harmony, about thirty years, and had eleven children, the eldest of whom (says Hutton) was my grandfather."

In another part of his book, Mr. H. relates the following singular adventures of a man named Noah Bullock : " Enraptured with his name, being that of the first navigator, and the founder of the largest family upon record, our post-diluvian Noah, having three sons, named them Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and to complete the farce, being a man of property, he built an ark and launched it upon the Derwent ; but whether a *bullock* graced the stern or not, history is silent. Here Noah and his three sons enjoyed their abode, and the people their laugh. But nothing is more common than for people to deceive one another, for the world acts under a mask. If the citizens ridiculed Noah, he laughed at them, for it afterward appeared that he had more sense than honesty, and more craft than either : for this disguise and retreat were to be a security for the coining of money. He knew that justice could not easily overtake him, and if it should, the *deep* was ready to hide his implements and his crimes. Sir Simon Degge, an active magistrate, was informed of Noah's proceedings, sent for him,

and desired to see a specimen of his work. Noah hesitated, but the worthy knight promised that no evil should ensue provided he would relinquish his occupation. He then took out a sixpence and told Sir Simon he could make as good as that. The magistrate smiled. Noah withdrew, broke up his ark, and escaped the rigor of the law."

As my object was not to write a history of Derby, I must now return to my narrative again. Soon after I entered upon my new situation I presented my credentials as a Methodist and a local preacher, and was recognized as such, first, by the superintendent, the Rev. Joseph Taylor, sen., and then by the Quarterly Meeting Conference. The Methodist chapel at Derby,* when I was

* Methodism was introduced into Derby in 1761. The first Methodist chapel, that in St. Michael's-lane, was erected in 1765. The one in King-street was erected in 1805, and seated about eight hundred persons. This was pulled down in 1841, and a new one, capable of seating sixteen hundred persons, with school-rooms underneath, capable of holding six hundred children, erected in its place.—See Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for 1841, p. 1026.

there, stood at the head of King-street. It was a very commodious building, with a small burying-ground in front, and a parsonage house on each side, forming something like wings to the main building. Underneath the body of the chapel were rooms for classes, leaders' and local preachers' meetings. The chapel was a spacious and very convenient place of worship, fitted up with pews in the gallery and in the centre below, and free seats for men on one side and women on the other. By this arrangement the congregation both kept and broke Mr. Wesley's rule: "Let the men and women sit apart." The aristocracy occupied pews in the gallery and middle of the building, and the poor men and women on either side below. This principle was actually carried out at the dedication of the new chapel at Leicester. Those who wore gold rings and goodly raiment were permitted to go into the gallery, while those who were clothed in coarse apparel were told to sit below. It also obtained on a special occasion at the City Road Chapel in London, when His Royal Highness the Duke

of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria, was one of the auditors: and why not? for it was the fashion at the Chapel Royal in London when I attended there. It is the court that fixes the standard both for town and country. This being the case at Derby, the singers were placed on seats rising one above another, like an infant class in Sunday-school, in front of the pulpit, and facing the congregation.

Our circuit preachers, the first year that I was in Derby, were the Rev. Joseph Taylor, sen., and the Rev. Edward Oakes. Mr. Taylor was a native of Derbyshire, and seemed to be an exception to that general rule, or proverb, "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kindred." He was, perhaps, seventy years of age, had traveled in Mr. Wesley's time, and was well acquainted with that extraordinary man. I once asked Mr. Taylor what were his impressions and views respecting the character of Mr. Wesley. His answer was, "If I had not known him to be a man I should have worshipped him, and 'Take him for all in all, I shall never

look upon his like again.’’ Mr. Taylor was very uniform in his preaching,—never very energetic, never languid, but always clear, sound, and strictly evangelical, and always concluded his discourse with a prayer ending with these words, ‘‘The Almighty grant it, for the Redeemer’s sake.’’ But if he was not as popular a preacher as Mr. Bradburn, Mr. Benson, or Mr. Bunting, he must have been very highly esteemed both by Mr. Wesley and the conference, for he was once president of the conference, and first preacher on the first London circuit, chairman of the district, &c. ‘‘The last few years of his life he was a supernumerary at Derby, where he was greatly beloved and honored. When young, he injured his constitution during a great revival of religion in Cornwall. By over exertion in this good work, he entailed upon himself infirmities which never left him, and which gave to his physical efforts in the pulpit an air of feebleness. His discourses, however, though not brilliant, contained a rich variety of important matter, well arranged, and delivered in a neat and pure style, and

in a gentle, graceful, and persuasive manner. Industry, economy, frugality, neatness, habits of order, and benevolence, were conspicuous traits in his character. He died in great peace June 22, 1830, aged seventy-eight years. Some of his last words were, ‘God is with me. He never leaves me. I can talk of nothing but the love of Christ.’ Mrs. Taylor died ten years before her husband. Her last words were, ‘Jesus Christ is to me health in sickness, ease in pain, life in death. God is always with me.’”—*See English Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for 1820 and 1830.*

But, well pleased as I was with Mr. Taylor, I was still more so, if possible, with Mr. Oakes. I had often heard of him, while living with Mr. Shaw at Ampthill, as a preacher of more than ordinary talents, Mr. S. being one of his regular hearers while Mr. O. was stationed at Halifax and Huddersfield, in Yorkshire. In his manner, Mr. Oakes was more animated than Mr. Taylor, and his sermons, in general, were more ample and more minute than those of his venerable colleague. There was a

shrewdness and ingenuity in Mr. Taylor, and a pleasant vein of humor, which, notwithstanding his gravity and good sense, would sometimes ooze out between the chinks of his well-arranged discourses. For example, in a sermon on these words, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his," he laid down three rules or evidences by which we might know whether we had the spirit of Christ or not; these were *the antecedents*, *the concomitants*, and *the subsequents*. When speaking of the *antecedents*, he inquired, "Have we been convinced of the *Fact*, the *Fault*, the *Folly*, the *Fountain*, and the *Fruit of sin*?" The five words beginning with the letter *F*, were probably chosen to assist the memory; but then every point was elucidated with as much precision as if he had been describing the five bodily senses. Then, again, after describing the character of a very wicked man, and making the inquiry, "Can such a man be said to have the spirit of Christ?" he raised his voice, and with an emphasis somewhat unusual, answered, "No! such a man is rather a limb of the devil than a

member of the mystical body of Christ.” Mr. Oakes was generally more energetic; and on one occasion, when preaching from Heb. ii, 3, after describing the abundant provisions of the gospel for perishing sinners, he exclaimed, in tones almost unearthly, “*How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*”

The wisdom of the British Conference, I think, appears in nothing more than in keeping closely to Mr. Wesley’s original plan of having circuits instead of stations. In the Derby circuit there were twenty-one appointments, and twenty local preachers. Every congregation was supplied with Sabbath preaching, either by the local or itinerant preachers; and the poorest place had the benefit of the same traveling preachers’ labors as the richest. Of the twenty local preachers, Mr. William Jones and Mr. John Wheeldon were my most intimate and agreeable companions. Mr. Jones was the young man whom I met at Leicester the evening before the dedication, and who informed me of the vacancy in the store which I afterwards filled. He was clerk for Mr. Hackett, a great

lover of good books, but very cautious about preaching before any of the brethren. Mr. Wheeldon was one of the operatives in Mr. Strutt's establishment at Darley. He was very friendly, a very pious young man, and a good preacher. With him and Mr. Jones I met in band nearly two years, on Sabbath morning, at nine o'clock, at the house of brother Jones; then attended chapel and heard the morning sermon; then went to our appointments; and if we could so manage the matter, we walked together in company, either going or returning, at least part of the way.

In addition to this pleasant intercourse between two of the brethren and myself, the local preachers who lived in the city, of whom there were ten, met once a week at the house of brother Fitchett, bookseller, in Saddler-gate, for the purpose of mutual improvement. Our plan was to choose a moderator for the night, who should name the subject for discussion for the next week, he being, in order, the first to speak on that question, and the others to follow in the order in which they stood on the plan.

When all had spoken, any one had a right to criticise, if he thought proper; no vote was taken on the question, but great deference was always paid to age, experience, and acknowledged ability. In this way we discussed some of the most important topics in theology; the brightest thoughts were by this means elicited; new views of old subjects were brought out; and if any one were in error, he was then set right, the final appeal being to the word of God, in all cases where that has recorded its testimony. Once a quarter the whole band of local preachers met with the traveling preachers, at which time our moral and ministerial character underwent a strict examination, and we received our appointments for the coming quarter. The superintendent submitted the Plan, in manuscript, which was read, corrected, if necessary, adopted, and finally printed for the use of the preachers, and all others who wished to have it. There were some peculiarities in relation to some of the appointments. The local preachers never officiated at Derby, unless the stationed preacher was sick or

absent; and to one or two of the preaching places only particular preachers could go, on account of the great distance. At every appointment there was a regular place of entertainment, some of which were kept by persons chosen by the society, and, if they were poor persons, they were paid by the society. At one place there were two families that entertained the preachers, and in general the richer family entertained the traveling preacher, and the other the local brethren; but as I was a stranger, from near London, they both took me in turn, and entertained me as kindly as if I had belonged to the traveling connection.

The traveling on Derby circuit, in summer time, was as pleasant as any one could desire; sometimes along the tow-path by the side of the canal, at other times through meadows, on the banks of the river, then along a fine road, and through pleasant villages, to the place of appointment. But in winter, and stormy weather, it was dreary enough. The traveling preachers were accommodated with a horse, which was the property of the circuit, and not subject to

the laws of the conference. If, however, he was not subject to the law of itinerancy, and liable to a change of home every two or three years, he was liable to another inconvenience, viz., a change of masters, and in that case he might have to carry a much greater burden one year than another. The custom of the itinerancy was for one preacher to spend two weeks on the circuit, while the other preacher was in town, and to take it in turns throughout the year. The predecessor of Mr. Oakes was the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, Jun., then a young married man, said to be one of the most talented young preachers in the connection. In the prime of life, and in the full tide of his popularity, I found that his fame had spread through every part of the circuit. In the notice given of him in the Minutes of Conference, after his death, it is said, "He stood forth as one of the most powerful preachers of God's truth among us—a burning and a shining light—a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—*See Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for 1841, p. 773.*

One of the most interesting local preachers that I became acquainted with in Derby was Mr. John Hackett. He was my class leader, and from that circumstance I had a good opportunity of judging of his piety and usefulness. His class was always well attended, and never do I recollect of having an unprofitable season while waiting upon the Lord in this means of grace. As a leader, he was faithful and much beloved. As a preacher, he was no man's copy, but a deep, original thinker; and his sermons were much more remarkable for good strong common sense, than for the niceties of grammar, the subtleties of logic, or the flowers of rhetoric. But the most popular local preacher in those parts, at that time, was Quinton Reynolds, of Belper. He was a young man of remarkable promise, and was called out to travel the year after I left Derby. But in less than two years he finished his work, and died in the Lord. He began to preach while he was an apprentice, and probably injured his health by too intense study. Blessed with a popular talent, followed by multitudes, and caressed by the few, he

found it necessary, in order to keep up his popularity, to consume the midnight oil, to the irreparable injury of his constitution. Disease set in, and brought him to a martyr's grave.

The successor of Mr. Taylor, in Derby, was the Rev. William Leach, a fine, portly-looking man, dignified, lofty, and sedate in his bearing; rather rigid in his manners and measures; a good preacher, a good disciplinarian, and, I have no doubt, a good pastor. But there was a great difference between him and Mr. Taylor, who was sociable, shrewd, and sometimes humorous; and a still greater difference between him and Mr. Oakes, who was affable, familiar, and condescending. When I had made up my mind to come to the United States, I requested of Mr. Leach and of Mr. Oakes letters of introduction. Mr. L. replied, "We never recommend persons to America." Mr. O., on the other hand, gave me three letters—one to the bishop, one to Mr. Eastburn, father of Bishop Eastburn, who had been one of his personal friends in England, and one to myself.

During my sojourn at Derby I had plenty of work as a local preacher, and, in general, plenty of employment in the store in the intervals of the Sabbath. But before a year had elapsed trade had become dull, and commerce had declined still more than it had done in 1815. In the month of August, 1817, my employer generously allowed me five days' leisure, for the purpose of attending the annual conference, which that year was held at Sheffield, in Yorkshire. On Saturday morning, therefore, by break of day, I and my two band-mates, William Jones and John Wheeldon, started on foot for the place. The distance, by the way we went, was forty miles ; yet we took time, "footed it well," as Bunyan says, and got there by dark. We passed through Belper just as the operatives were leaving the cotton-mills to go to their breakfast. The streets were thronged with great numbers of persons of both sexes, who appeared healthy, and happy, and decently clad. We took our dinner at Matlock, at a small tavern, among the mountains of feldspar and mineral waters, to which hundreds an-

nually repair, for the benefit of the waters and the beauty of the scenery. The ornaments made of spar were extremely beautiful. From Matlock we journeyed onward till we came to Chesterfield, at which place, being rather foot weary, we rested, and called for tea. We were all sons of temperance, as far as beer, wine, spirituous liquors, and tobacco were concerned; but I am afraid our waiter, on this occasion, had some reason to think we were intemperate in the use of tea.

While at the conference, I had an opportunity of hearing the Rev. Messrs. Thomas Roberts, of Bath, Robert Johnson, governor of Kingswood school, George Smith, missionary, R. Watson, Philip Garrett, Thos. Dowty, Thos. Rogers, the first Methodist preacher I remember to have heard, and the now eloquent and highly esteemed Dr. Beaumont, then in his nineteenth year. Mr. Gaulter was the president, and Mr. Bunting secretary. Twenty-two preachers were received into full connection, among whom were Mr. Beaumont and Mr. Thomas Savage. Mr. Savage's account of his conversion was very remarkable.

His father was a professed Atheist. His eldest sister had married an officer in the army, who, while on foreign service, was assassinated by a Spaniard. His superior officer sent a letter to the family informing them of his death. But, *thirteen weeks before the letter was received*, while the family were sitting together in the room, the windows closed, the doors fastened, candles lighted, and the fire burning, in the month of November, they were suddenly alarmed by an apparition. The old gentleman doubted the reality of all such things, but the officer's child cried to go to his father, and the wife exclaimed, "*It is he; I know it is; he is killed!*" and from that time went into mourning. When the letter arrived, the old gentleman knew not what to make of it; but the rest were *convinced*, and some of them were subsequently converted. During conference we attended the morning preaching at five o'clock, and the evening meetings, as well as all the meetings on the Sabbath. But we were not permitted to attend the deliberations of conference, which I thought was very unkind as well as unjust, as we

had walked forty miles to "behold their order," had done the work of local preachers four years, and had paid our quarterage and pew rent as promptly as any other members in the connection. On Sunday, in the interval of public worship, we visited one of the Sabbath-schools, where were eleven hundred children—five hundred boys in one room, and six hundred girls in another; and on week days we visited the factories, where cutlery of all sorts is made in great abundance for both Europe and America.

Having finished our visit at Sheffield, we returned, by the way of Alfreton, as hastily as we could, having neither time nor money sufficient to enable us to visit Buxton, or the Peak, or even Chatsworth, the seat of the Duke of Devonshire, or any other remarkable place in the county. The next Sabbath, in the absence of Mr. Oakes, it fell to my lot to supply the pulpit in the King-street chapel, Derby. I preached from a text which was suggested to my mind while returning from conference, by the spirit of love and union which subsisted between me and my companions as we walked together

by the way. The text may be found in Jeremiah xxxii, 38, 39.

On the Friday following I saw four men hanged at the jail in Friar Gate, Derby, for setting fire to stacks of grain. Friar Gate is the longest and widest street in Derby, and, I suppose, there were not less than twenty thousand persons present to witness the execution. Such exhibitions may frighten children; but as to their being of any moral benefit, either to the culprits or to the community, I very much doubt it. These men were convicted, but their guilt was doubted by many; and even if that had been proved, ten years' imprisonment might have brought them to repentance, and made them good and useful men. I knew a man who was imprisoned in the county jail of Leicester on a charge of treason, but not being found guilty in the eye of the law, experienced religion while in prison, and afterward became a preacher of the gospel, and in the end died in peace.

Great distress prevailed throughout the country at this time. The summer was so wet and cold that in some instances the

harvest was not gathered, but rotted on the ground, and that which was gathered was hardly fit to be eaten. Trade was dull, and I thought it would be better for me to seek a place in London. On the 22d of September, therefore, I took coach at half-past three, P. M., for Newport Pagnel, and after traveling all night, (no railroads then!) arrived there between three and four the next morning. I then walked to Stewkley, fourteen miles, alone, and for the greater part of the way under the most painful apprehension of coming evil that I ever endured. On the 24th, after spending one day with my mother, my brother Daniel and I walked to the village of Wing, and after making a short stay at my brother Richard's, proceeded to Tring, where my brother John then lived. We stayed one night with his family, and the next day took coach for London, where we arrived about eleven o'clock, A. M. It was the day on which the new chapel in Great Queen-street was opened for public worship. Mr. Benson had preached in the forenoon, but we were in time to hear Mr. Newton in the

afternoon, and Mr. Watson in the evening. The former preached from 2 Cor. i, 11, and the latter from 2 Chron. vi, 40, 41. This chapel was said to be the most elegant built by the Methodists in the kingdom. It cost twelve thousand pounds sterling. The pulpit stands at a distance from the wall, and is necessarily very high to correspond with the edifice, which has in it two galleries, one above the other. The crowd was very great in the evening, perhaps three thousand persons, and at the close of the service we were warned to beware of pickpockets. The warning was certainly necessary, for when I got home to my brother's I found that my coat was cut across the pocket inside, but how, or when it was done, I never knew. The little money that I had was in another pocket, so the robber got nothing for his trouble. The instrument with which he cut my coat must have been very sharp, and I have ever felt thankful that I was not sensible of the operation, for if I had, I might have put forth my hand to ascertain the cause, and have received a wound that would have lamed me for life.

The next day, while walking in the street, I was taken very ill, and it was with great difficulty that I could get home. My disease was probably pleurisy. The pain in my side was very severe, and was attended with partial delirium. But I was at my brother's, and was well taken care of. His family physician, Mr. Benson, son of the Rev. Joseph Benson, attended me, and in less than two weeks, through the blessing of God, and the kind attention of my friends, I was able to leave the city. Perhaps this was the trouble of which I had a presentiment a few days before. But why are we not always warned of danger near? I cannot tell. Perhaps we should be if we were to live nearer to God by faith and humble prayer. The same day that I left London I arrived at Stewkley, the home of my childhood, but now no home to me, as my father was dead, and my mother was a widow. I therefore tarried only one night, and the next day walked to Ampthill, where I spent four days with my old friends. The next day I attended the anniversary of the Bedfordshire Bible Society, at which His Grace

the Duke of Bedford presided, and Samuel Whitbread, Esq., was one of the speakers. Finding no opening for business either in London or Bedfordshire, I made up my mind to return to Derby. In doing this, I stayed a day and a night at Northampton. While there, I had the pleasure of taking tea with a company of preachers, among whom was Mr. Watson. The conversation of Mr. Watson and his friends was exceedingly interesting; it was all on religious subjects, and on some of the great doctrines of divine revelation. The Methodist chapel in Northampton had undergone some repairs and improvements, and Mr. Watson was there to preach the dedication sermon. He took for his text 2 Chron. vi. 41, 42. This was the third time I heard him from the same text, but it was none the worse for being repeated. A very interesting account of the manner in which this text was suggested to Mr. Watson, is given in the memoirs of his life, by Mr. Jackson. Mr. Watson was at the house of his friend, Mr. Garbutt, of Hull, and, in the course of conversation, said to Mr. G., "I have engaged

to preach at the opening of a new chapel in Leeds ; the time is drawing near, and, do what I may, I cannot think of a suitable text." "I asked him," says Mr. G., "if he had ever thought of Solomon's beautiful prayer at the dedication of the temple ? He said he had not ; and on referring to it, he was exceedingly struck with 2 Chron. vi, 41, 42. A train of thought was presented to his view ; his active mind was at work ; he retired from the company, and afterward read to me the greater part of the very copious notes of a sermon which he had founded upon that passage."—*Watson's Life, 8vo. edition*, p. 146.

At the missionary meeting in Derby this year, (1818,) I had the pleasure of hearing the Rev. Robert Wood preach his famous missionary sermon from Isaiah lxii, 1, and took copious notes at the time ; but, lest I should do him injustice, I will not print them. At the public meeting, I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Wood again. His address was in true military style. He compared the Protestant benevolent portions of the Christian community to an army ; the

Bible Society to the main body; the Missionary Societies to the right wing; the Tract Society to the left wing; the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the vanguard; and the Sunday school, to a corps of reserve, to bring up the rear. This army has to do battle for the Lord against all the powers of darkness; of which there are 500,000,000 of Pagans, 150,000,000 Mohammedans, 100,000,000 Papists, 30,000,000 of the Greek and Armenian Churches, and about 10,000,000 of Jews and infidels. He then spoke of arms and ammunition, military tactics, &c., and called for a good supply of gold and silver balls, copper bullets, and plenty of paper cartridges to fire them off with. James Montgomery, Esq., the poet, was present, and spoke of the sufferings of missionaries, especially of the Moravians, in Greenland, Labrador, &c. Mr. Watson was there, and followed Mr. Montgomery in a speech of some length. The collection was about \$400, and that at Belper, the week before, \$250.

While I was at Derby I narrowly escaped death in two instances. The first was in

the winter of 1816. I had walked to Dale Abbey, about eight miles, on Sunday morning, to fill an appointment there in the afternoon of that day. The path lay through fields and meadows, saturated with rain and melted snow. By the time I got there my boots and stockings were as wet as if I had forded the river; but I was so diffident that I dare not ask for a change of shoes and stockings, but sat and stood in my wet clothes till it was time to return. The consequence of this imprudence was a violent cold, and a severe fit of inflammatory rheumatism, which rendered me helpless for several weeks. My employer occupied an old house which was built for a bank. Every part was intended to be fire-proof. The floors of the chambers were not of pine, and covered with carpet, but of cement, as hard and as cold as polished marble. There was no fire in the room. The wife of my employer, and the rest of his family, except a sister and a servant girl, lived at Quarn-don, three miles from Derby. My mother was too far away to come and see her sick boy. I had no sister to sit by my bed-side

to minister to my wants, and, indeed, no one could sit long at a time in a cold room like that, on a stone floor, without a carpet, and without fire. The apprentice, who used to sleep with me, had betrayed his trust, and was dismissed, and, of course, I had to be alone. The sister of my employer, and the hired girl, filled the place of a motherly sister, and nurse, so to speak, or I might have perished; for I was dreadfully sick, and as helpless as a child. Any kind of sickness is bad enough in winter, but the inflammatory rheumatism, though it is not considered dangerous, if it can be kept from the head and the heart, is about as hard to bear as any sickness one would desire. The way in which I employed my thoughts during this season of affliction, may be gathered from a little poem, entitled "Grace and Providence," which I composed as I lay on my bed, (Psalm lxiii, 6; Sol. Song iii, 1,) and afterwards committed to writing, as soon as I was able.

The other circumstance was this: On Wednesday, the 10th of June, 1818, I came near being drowned. I had never learned

to swim, and was very desirous of learning that useful practice. My predecessor in the store was drowned in the river, and I was not willing to trust myself in that treacherous stream ; so I went into the canal, near one of the locks, where the water was wide, and deep enough for the purpose. At first I succeeded pretty well, but soon got tired, and began to sink. As I rose, I made a desperate effort to reach the shore, and after touching the bottom with my feet three times, "I gained the farther bank at last," and placed my feet on solid ground once more. For a moment I was frightened, but my recollection and my courage never forsook me ; and though I thought, while under the water, that I should be drowned, I believed it to be my duty to try and save myself, and, in trying, I succeeded. Since that I have never attempted to swim.

The time was now drawing nigh for me to leave Derby. On the 15th of July I took coach for London, and on the Sabbath following spent the day with a few friends at Camberwell. In the evening, at Peck-

ham, I heard Dr. Collyer. His text was 1 Samuel xv, 13, 14, and his sermon was an eloquent and faithful exposé of the treachery of the human heart, as exhibited in the conduct of Saul, king of Israel. Not finding a situation to my liking in London, I paid one more visit to my native place, and while there preached my first and last sermon in the village where I was born. The occasion was the death of a distant relative, and my text was Job xiv, 14. In the course of a few days I returned to Derby, and on the following Sabbath, in company with another local preacher, as was the custom, held a love-feast at Chellaston. The next Sabbath (August 9) was the anniversary of the opening of the chapel at Derby. I then had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Newton three times. He was in his prime, being, as I suppose, about forty years of age. His personal appearance, voice, manner, and style of preaching, were all greatly in his favor. "His locks were bushy, and black as a raven;" his form erect, and his forehead fair; his voice deep-toned, sonorous, and clear; and his

style of preaching, though differing but little from what it was when he was in this country, was, perhaps, more vigorous and captivating. At any rate, one could hardly endure to hear an ordinary preacher either read a hymn or make a prayer in the same place on the same day.

The same night, at twelve o'clock, after hearing Mr. Newton three times, I took coach again for London, having heard of a situation after I left it. On my way I called at Northampton, to pay another visit to my friend J. C. Boddington, formerly the principal of a classical boarding-school at Ampthill, but now residing at Northampton. On Monday evening I complied with the wish of Mr. Boddington, and his friend Mr. Wilde, and preached a short discourse in the chapel where I had lately heard Mr. Watson. By an association of ideas, of which I could not easily divest myself at that time and place, thoughts of Doddridge, Cowper, Hervey, and the author of *The Theological Institutes*, often flitted across my mind while I was there; but in my sermon, I fear, there was little of the

piety, the poetry, or the eloquence, of those remembered ornaments of the Church in that part of my native land.

In London, though I had obtained what was considered a good situation, with a comfortable salary, and though I boarded at my brother's, and had the privilege of hearing the best of preachers, I was not contented; and while listening to a discourse, one Sunday evening, in Hoxton chapel, from the words of Christ, Luke xv, 7, I thought thus within myself,—“London is not the place for me; I ought to go as a missionary, and preach the gospel to those who need it.” I had often thought so before; had offered myself, and might have gone, but sickness prevented me,—and, perhaps, it was all for the best.

CHAPTER XIII.

FAREWELL TO MY NATIVE LAND.

“The last link is broken that bound me to thee.”

TOWARD the latter end of August I called at the Book Room, City Road, to get the Magazine for September, and while there I very unexpectedly met with my old and particular friend, Mr. James Davidson. We first became acquainted with each other when we were local preachers, on the Bedford circuit. He then lived at the Duke of Bedford's, in the capacity of a gardener, and I at Ampthill, in that of a “linen draper bold.” We had not seen each other for nearly twelve months, and I knew not what had become of him. He now informed me that he was about to embark for the United States of America. The moment he said this I began to feel strong desires to accompany him, and when I made known my mind to him he seemed overjoyed. We agreed to meet again the next day and talk the matter over, and if my brother favored

the project, I resolved, in my own mind, to go to America. Accordingly, we met the next day, consulted my brother, obtained his consent, and a little help in the time of need, without which I could not have come, as I was “low in funds” at that time, having been frequently sick, some time out of employment, and at great expense traveling about from place to place. The time was too short for me to go and bid my mother farewell, so I wrote to her, and informed her whither I was going. I also wrote to Messrs. Taylor, Leach, Oakes, Sowter, and Hackett, “desiring letters of commendation.” Mr. Oakes sent me three, Mr. Hackett two, and Mr. Sowter one. Mr. Oakes spoke of me as a preacher, Mr. Sowter commended me as a clerk, and Mr. Hackett as a member of his class. I had not reported myself in London, as a member, or preacher, in the Methodist Connection, and therefore could not have obtained even a certificate. I had heaps of quarterly tickets from 1803 to 1818, and printed plans of different circuits on which I had labored as a local preacher; but these did

not satisfy me. Mr. Davidson had received a line from Mr. Blanchard, the book steward in London, certifying his membership and good standing as a local preacher, but he lost it before we arrived in this country. It was, therefore, well for him and for me, that I had forethought enough to procure these necessary credentials. What is a stranger to do in a foreign country without letters of recommendation? He may, to be sure, introduce himself, and tell his own story, as I have known many to do. But it is for others to believe them or not. The letters I brought with me, thanks to a kind Providence, answered every purpose: they introduced me to all concerned; they paved the way into the traveling connection; the fame of them reached my first circuit before I arrived there; and, what to me is still better, the purport of them has been confirmed by many letters since.

Having made our arrangements for the voyage, we returned to my brother's, in Hoxton Square, to take our last night's lodging in London. The watchman, by request, called us up at three o'clock. My

sister-in-law provided for us a comfortable breakfast. My brother accompanied us to the ship, which lay at anchor at Gravesend, about thirty miles down the river. He saw us on board, and then returned with the packet to London. The next day was the Sabbath, but a very unsabbatical day to us. The seamen were employed taking in cargo and ballast, and the passengers in arranging matters, and answering questions at the alien office, previous to our departure. While we were thus detained, my careful brother came again, with the packet, from London, to bring me the letters referred to above. They had come by mail from Derby, after we left London, and my brother judging them to be of importance, took the pains to bring them to us on board. As he took his final leave, he said to me, "Farewell, my dear brother! If you succeed in America, let us hear from you often. If you do not, come back; I will receive you, if nobody else will." This was all he said, but his looks seemed to say—

"I have not loved lightly, I'll think of thee yet;
I'll pray for thee nightly, till life's sun is set."

My brother was a member of a class that met in the City Road chapel. He died a few years since, and was interred in the same burying ground that contains the ashes of Mr. Wesley, Dr. Adam Clarke, and Mr. Watson.

I now took my leave of the great and busy city of London—"the metropolis of the world," as Dr. Humphrey calls it—with less emotion, perhaps, than some might imagine! I was not disposed, either by inclination or habit, to be a politician, and too little interested in public affairs to listen to the debates in Parliament; too busy to spend my time in viewing public buildings, splendid palaces, and magnificent works in the arts and sciences. St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, and the British Museum, are nearly all the public places I visited. I was too religious to attend theatres, operas, and all other places of amusement, even once, and too republican to care anything about seeing the king or queen. There are, however, many things in and about London, which make it to me the most interesting city in the world. And if any

one who may read these little sketches, wish to know more of the magnificence of the place, the wealth of England, and the character of the English, I would recommend him to read Dr. Humphrey's Tour.* The doctor is thoroughly American in his feelings, and at the same time so candid and correct in his statements, that I think he is equally free from partiality on the one hand, as from prejudice on the other. Speaking of the wealth of England, the doctor says: "During the French revolutionary war, which broke out in 1793 and lasted till 1802; and the war against Bonaparte, which began in 1803 and ended in 1815, the expenditures of Great Britain were *eight thousand millions of dollars!* Was there ever any other nation since the world began that could have raised one-third of this sum, without utter bankruptcy and ruin? And be it remembered that nine-tenths of this incredible sum was as much lost to the nation as if it had been thrown into the Atlantic; and yet there is no count-

* See also London in Olden Times, and Modern London, Nos. 492 and 508, Youth's Library.

ing her remaining treasures. It is true her national debt is enormous—*between eight and nine hundred millions of pounds!*—under the weight of which, it has often been predicted, she must one day sink to rise no more! But to whom does she owe this debt? To France? to Russia? to the United States? No; but to *herself*, that is, to her own people. Not a dollar of it is due to any foreign nation; so that if the British government were to declare itself bankrupt to-morrow, the *nation* would be just as rich as it is now. It would be an act of extreme injustice to all the fund-holders, to be sure, and would ruin thousands of families; but the money would all remain in the country—and Britain would continue to be, as she is, by far the richest nation in the world.”—Vol. I, p. 193.

Having taken my last farewell of the crowded cities, splendid buildings, fertile fields, and pleasant walks of my native land, with a very limited knowledge of men and things, less of sound wisdom and discretion, and still less of that which Solomon says (Eccles. x, 19) “answereth all things,”

I embarked with my companions, James and Lydia Davidson, on board the old ship Duke of Marlborough, for the United States of America. Unlike our Mexican volunteers and California gold seekers, we were neither impelled by the love of fame, nor the prospect of wealth, to tempt the dangers of the ocean, and try our fortunes in a foreign land. But we thought that, in the order of Providence, we had a call to go abroad ; and we could say—

“ His call we obey, like Abram of old ;
We know not the way, but faith makes us bold ;
For though we are strangers we have a sure Guide,
And trust in all dangers, *The Lord will provide.*”

I had never seen the great deep—the mighty ocean,—and, of course, everything belonging to a sea voyage was marvelously interesting. I had no dread of sea-sickness, or fears of being cast away ; I knew nothing of the perils of the sea, and thought but little about them ; but, buoyant in spirit, and joyful in hope, I slept as soundly on the tossing wave, as I have since on solid ground. And yet there is something awfully sublime in being day after day, and

night after night, floating on the watery deep, in a frail vessel, at the mercy of the wind and waves; on every hand a wide waste of waters, perhaps a thousand miles from land; overhead the starry firmament, underneath the fathomless abyss; should a fire break out in the hold, or the ship spring a leak, and no friendly sail be in sight, to render us aid in such a case, "*refuge can only be found in resignation.*"

CHAPTER XIV.

VOYAGE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

FOR aught we knew, as midsummer was past, we might run foul of an iceberg that had broken loose from its companions in the northern seas;* or we might encounter the fierce tornado, and the dreadful hurricane, which sometimes are so sudden that no art can evade them, and so destructive that no power can withstand them. Or we might be in the same situation as were Paul and his companions, when "neither sun, nor moon, nor stars appeared for many days;" and in that case we might lose our reckoning, run foul of another ship, and founder in the mighty ocean. Indeed, the dangers are so many and so great, that the wonder is, not that so many mariners are lost, but that so many escape.

The sea also affords matter for profitable reflection. It is an inexhaustible store-

* See "Encounter with an Iceberg," Christian Advocate and Journal for May 15, 1851.

house for food, where all manner of fish live, thrive, and multiply, without expense to man. Unlike the earth, which is divided into countries, kingdoms, and estates, the sea is the property of all nations; and its productions are free for any one who will be at the pains to take them. It is the immeasurable and exhaustless source of clouds and rain, which, by the silent, viewless, and constant process of evaporation, are drawn from its bosom, and being borne on the light wings of the wind, are carried to the place where they are needed, and made to descend in fruitful showers upon the thirsty land. (See Dr. Clarke's Notes on Job xxxvii, 11-13.)

"I love the sea, she is my fellow-creature;
My careful purveyor; she provides me store;
She walls me round, she makes my diet greater;
She wafts me treasure from a foreign shore;—

But, Lord of oceans, when compared to thee,
What is the ocean, or her wealth to me?"

Quarles' Emblems.

Moreover, as Bishop Horne remarks, in his notes on the 107th Psalm, "The world is a sea—the Church is a ship—life is a

voyage—and heaven is the port of endless rest.” Yes, heaven is the port

“ Where all the ship’s company meet,
Who sail’d with the Saviour beneath ;
With shouting each other they greet,
And triumph o’er sorrow and death ;
The voyage of life’s at an end ;
The mortal affliction is past ;
The age that in heaven they spend,
Forever and ever shall last.”

C. Wesley.

When we embarked on board “The Duke of Marlborough,” at Gravesend, for the United States, the weather was as calm and as pleasant as it is wont to be in those latitudes in the months of September and October, and so it continued for more than half the voyage. But before we reached these hospitable shores the wintry winds of November began to blow upon the broad Atlantic, from the north-west; and the Gulf stream, or contrary currents, or something else, carried us into warmer regions. At one time we supposed, from the mildness of the weather, that we were not far from Bermuda. Then, again, a change came on,

and we were lost in the fog, on the banks of Newfoundland. But before we really knew our latitude or our longitude, we were actually becalmed for several days, and then it was that I thought of those beautiful words of the poet, which, when in England, I used to sing:—

“At anchor laid, and far from home,
Toiling I cry, Sweet Spirit, come ;
Celestial breeze, no longer stay,
But swell my sails and speed my way.”

We were not really “at anchor,” but without “the auspicious gale,” we could no more move than if we had been fastened to our moorings in the river. And so it is with the sinner, the fair moralist, the proud Pharisee, who would sail for the port of endless rest, without the aid of the Holy Spirit. He may think his vessel is well built, well provisioned, well manned; he may even square the yards, and spread the sails, and point toward heaven. But what of that? The poet was right when he said—

“But I can only spread my sail,
Thou, thou must breathe the auspicious gale.”

Our Sabbaths, while at sea, were, probably, spent as pleasantly and as profitably as they could be, considering the disagreeable circumstances in which we were placed. Our ship was small, and, judging from appearances, hardly sea-worthy. Our captain did not appear to be a very experienced navigator, but his first mate seemed to understand his business thoroughly. Our ship's company was not large, but in that little band there was as great a variety as I ever saw within so small a circle. There were English, Scotch, Irish, German, French, Italian, an African, a Canadian, and an Anglo-Saxon-American. Our captain was a Londoner, and, probably, a member of the Church of England; at any rate, when the first Sabbath came, after we were fairly out of sight of land, and beyond the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, we were called together, by the ringing of the bell, to attend prayers on deck. The weather was delightfully calm, and the surface of the ocean as unruffled as the placid bosom of a sylvan lake; the captain read part of the morning service, as it stands in the prayer-book; but

there was neither singing nor sermon, which I regretted the more, as the season was so favorable to devotion. Could my friend, the Rev. Isaac Bradnack, and the singers from Bedford, have been there, I question if I should have been willing to exchange the services of that hour, for those of any of our splendid chapels either in London or elsewhere! But as the captain gave us no sermon, and as the voice of praise was not heard, Brother Davidson and I offered our services in the evening, for the benefit of the steerage passengers and crew. Our offer was accepted, and, at the hour appointed, we began by singing Dr. Watt's version of the 100th Psalm, "Before Jehovah's awful throne," &c., which was followed by prayer. Brother Davidson then read one of Archbishop Tillotson's sermons, on Luke xii, 31, and I concluded with prayer. All present gave great attention. One only found fault, and he, an Antinomian, only with the sermon, which he thought was "too legal." We had one Methodist, besides ourselves, in the company, and he seemed, as he expressed himself, "vastly pleased

with the proceedings." From the 20th to the 22d of September we encountered strong gales of wind from the north-west. On the 22d, toward evening, the captain gave orders to close-reef the main-topsail. The gale increased, and was soon at its height. I was very anxious to witness "a storm at sea," and, contrary to orders, remained on deck, while all the other passengers were cooped up below. Pretty soon I lost the use of my "sea legs," as the phrase is, and found myself going to leeward faster than I wished; I then clung to the shrouds, and saved myself from going overboard.

At this dreadful moment a young man fell from the weather-yard-arm on the deck, within a few feet of where I then stood. He was taken up and carried into the cabin, and died within about an hour. We had no surgeon on board to let blood, or set a broken bone, or perhaps his life might have been spared. It was said he was a Russian by birth, but I fear he knew nothing of experimental religion. Perhaps he had no pious mother to pray for him, or, in answer to her prayers, he might have fallen into the sea

instead of on the deck, and escaped with his life.

The next morning, at nine o'clock, we were all summoned on deck to witness a "burial at sea." The storm had subsided, the air was calm, and the sky unclouded, but the "restless ocean" refused to "be still." The Redeemer was there, but not in his miracle-working power. A deep and solemn sense of his majesty and mercy rested upon some of our minds, if not upon all. The body of the poor sailor-boy was wrapped in canvass, with a bag of chalk stones at the feet to sink it in the ocean. It was laid on one of the main hatches, close to the gangway. The captain read the burial service as it is in the Episcopal prayer-book, and when he pronounced the words, "We therefore commit his body," instead of saying "to the earth," he changed the words, and said, "to the *deep*;" orders were then instantly obeyed, and all that was mortal of this young man was sunk beneath the wave, there to rest till "the sea shall give up her dead." The colleagues of the late Dr. Coke, who was buried at sea,

seemed to prefer that mode of interment; and I have heard the Rev. E. T. Taylor, the mariners' preacher at Boston, talk eloquently about having the "clear unsullied waves of the ocean for his bed, the sea-weed for his winding-sheet, the coral for his pillow," and I do not know what for his head-stone; but for my own part I should prefer being laid in a dry sandy soil, in an elevated spot, near some shady grove, where the birds might sing among the branches of the trees, and the gentle breezes might kiss the flowers that bloomed over my grave; and if I should leave only one friend on earth, that friend might visit the spot.

When we had been three weeks at sea we discovered "a sail in sight," which proved to be an East Indiaman, on her way from Bombay to Liverpool. Soon after we saw her we hoisted our colors, which she speedily answered, and being to windward of us soon bore down upon us. It was to us matter of rejoicing that, as it was a time of peace, we had no reason to think that this strange sail was an enemy, or a privateer, or a pirate.

When, therefore, she was within a short distance, we lowered the jolly-boat, which was soon rowed toward the friendly vessel. It was in the afternoon of a very pleasant day, and it was a beautiful sight to behold the gallant vessels lying to, and the little boat tossing up and down between them. In a few minutes our boat was alongside the Indiaman, and after transacting some little business, returned. I took the opportunity, while the vessels were nearing each other, to write a letter to my brother in London; and I afterwards understood that it was very gratifying to my friends to learn that at the time the letter was written we were, in reality, "half seas over," or, in other words, we were about midway between the port of London and that of New-York.

Soon after this our voyage began to be rather tedious. But the unpleasant feelings induced by "sailing slowly many days," were greatly mitigated by reading aloud to a little group, an interesting account of the first mission to the islands of the Pacific, in the ship Duff. The book was owned by a fellow-passenger, named Benham, who had

worked in the king's dock-yard, Plymouth. He knew Captain Wilson, and several of the missionaries, and lived at Portsmouth at the time they sailed. And what made it still more interesting to me was the fact that I had recently read the memoir of Captain Wilson, had been at his house in Camberwell, near London, to see a townsman of mine, who lived there in the capacity of a footman, from whom I heard many pleasing accounts of that intrepid voyager and friend of the missionary cause. Captain Wilson had been in the East India service, was once a prisoner in the Black-hole at Calcutta, and endured almost unparalleled sufferings while abroad, and before he was brought to the knowledge of the truth. And "if escapes from dangers, which excluded every hope; if privations and sufferings, which few of his fellow-sufferers survived; if deliverance from miseries, the severest that humanity could endure; if the continuance of health, while almost all around were sickening and dying; if restoration from diseases, which were almost universally fatal, had been sufficient to convert a sin-

ner from the error of his ways, their efficacy had been exemplified in the conversion of Captain Wilson. But miseries and mercies had alike failed of effecting any salutary impressions on his heart. He rejected the word of God, and was wholly unconcerned about eternity. In this state of mind, after a fit of sickness, at the suggestion of a friend, he took up *The Christian Officer's Panoply*, a useful work in defence of Christianity, written by Major-General Burn, of the Royal Marines. This work, under God, was the instrument of his conversion; and from that time, to promote the glory of his Creator and Saviour, and the good of his fellow-men, became the object of his ardent pursuit. When the Missionary Society, instituted in London in 1795, proposed sending a vessel with missionaries to the islands of the Pacific Ocean, Captain W. offered himself to conduct the voyage without any pecuniary reward. His offer was accepted, the work was accomplished, the mission succeeded, the captain returned to his comfortable retreat at Camberwell, near London, and, after a number of years, died, a

distinguished ornament of the faith he once derided and despised."

I have frequently noticed, with delightful emotions, the glorious, and, I may say, gorgeous appearance of the sky at sunset, when on land, but I know of nothing on *terra firma* that can equal in grandeur and beauty such a scene as I beheld at sea in the month of October, 1818. On the evening of the sixth of that month, after enjoying, with my fellow-passengers, a delightful sail of twenty-four hours' fair wind, I was standing on the deck, looking, with wishful eye, toward the far west, just as the sun went down. I thought of home, I thought of heaven, then of that good land to which our course was directed; and certainly, for once, I did wish our voyage might soon come to an end. And then, for a moment, thoughts of danger and disappointment, and of sickness and death among strangers, in a city which I had never seen, or in the far-off wilderness, where, perhaps, it might be my lot to travel, would press upon my mind, and then, again, I thought—

"Should fate command me to the farthest verge
Of the green earth, to distant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to song; where first the sun
Gilds Indian mountains, *or his setting beam*
Flames on the Atlantic Isles, 'tis naught to me,
Since God is ever present, ever felt,
In the void waste, as in the city full;
And where he vital breathes there must be joy."

Thomson's Seasons.

The words of Dr. Watts did not then occur to me, or I might have sung them, as I have often done since, for they were literally true in that case:—

"How fine has the day been, how bright was the sun,
How lovely and joyful the course that he run,
Though he rose in a mist, when his race he begun,

 And there follow'd some droppings of rain:
But now the fair traveler's come to the west—
His rays are all gold, and his beauties are best,
As he paints the sky gay, now he sinks to his rest,
 And foretells a bright rising again."

The day following that glorious sunset was as fine, and as fair, and almost as warm, as any day in July; but the Tuesday following the weather was most piercing cold. How to account for this sudden and great change I could not imagine, never having witnessed the like in London, or in any

other place. Such changes, however, I have frequently experienced since, and that no longer ago than the present season, (1851.)

On some occasions *sunrise* at sea affords as pleasing a spectacle as *sunset*; not so brilliant, so splendid, so gorgeous, but equally gratifying to the eye, the mind, the heart; for as a glorious victory is followed by tears, and suffering, and sorrow, and the commencement of a season of peace is followed by smiles, and joy, and plenty, so a glorious sunset is followed by the darkness and dangers of night, and a cloudless sunrise is followed by the light and safety of day.

It was on the 27th of October, when we had been at sea more than seven weeks, when our stock of provisions began to fail, and we were put on short allowance, that the news of a "fine morning and fair wind" sounded through our ranks, and brought many a weary passenger on deck to behold the king of day emerging from the briny deep. O how delightful it was to behold him coming out of the chambers of the east, and "rejoicing as a strong man to run a race." His color, at first, was a deep crim-

son, then scarlet, then orange, then like burnished gold. About noon the breeze increased, which helped us on most charmingly. O what a splendid sight it is to behold, from the quarter-deck of one vessel, when under full sail, another vessel, with all her sails set, both moving before the viewless wind, in the same direction, gayly and merrily towards their destined port! But it is often at sea as it is on the ocean of life,—a bright morning is succeeded by a cloudy afternoon, and a fair day is but the precursor of foul weather. It was so with us. The next three days after that glorious sunrise, were the most uncomfortable of all the thirty-one days of October. It was often a source of amusement to me, during the latter part of the time we were on shipboard, to talk with the passengers, and listen to their calculations on the probable length of the voyage. One good old man, of no particular denomination, but a great believer in coincidences, considered England as the house of bondage, and America as the land of promise; our ship's company as true Israelites, on our journey

to the Canaan of rest. He had no fears that any of us should come short through unbelief, but was actually of the opinion, at the former part of the voyage, that, as the ancient Israelites were forty years in the wilderness, we should be *forty days* on the ocean. Poor man! all his calculations failed. His forty days' voyage proved to be one of twice that length; and instead of a clerkship in New-York, at a salary of \$500 a year, which he hoped to realize, he found nothing to do but to sell almanacs, and other little books, and hardly enough of that to keep him from starving.

CHAPTER XV.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA.

OUR voyage across the Atlantic was grievously protracted, but it came to an end at last. When we had been seven weeks and seven hours out of sight of land, and knew not that we should ever set foot on shore again ; when our little stock of provisions was almost gone, and fears of starvation occasionally flitted across the mind ; on the never-to-be-forgotten first of November, 1818, about four o'clock, P. M., the coast of Nova Scotia appeared in sight ! We were somewhat disappointed that it was not Sandy Hook, but were glad to find ourselves, though late in the season, anywhere on this side of the Atlantic. What a mercy it was that it was not at Cape Breton, or Newfoundland, at that inclement season of the year. By eight o'clock, P. M., with the aid of a pilot, we were safely moored in Halifax Bay. On Monday morning, about nine o'clock, we went ashore, and between ten and eleven

partook of a plentiful breakfast, consisting of fresh bread and butter, beef-steak, and the best fresh fish I ever tasted, with tea and coffee served up in first-rate style. They who wished for ardent spirits were supplied, at a very moderate charge; but most of us were in such good spirits, seeing we had got safe to land, that we needed no stimulants. The greatest difficulty lay in keeping from eating too much, as we had been kept on short allowance for more than two weeks. After breakfast brother Davidson and I waited on the venerable William Black, a supernumerary Methodist preacher, and on Mr. James Dunbar, resident missionary, both of whom showed us great kindness.

When we left England we little thought we should see Nova Scotia; and when we found ourselves in "the region of sea-fog and frost," we had no thoughts of tarrying there more than a day or two; but we were unexpectedly detained ten days, which afforded us an opportunity of seeing a little of the town of Halifax, and of becoming acquainted with some of the principal mem-

bers of the Methodist Society there. But as my object in leaving England was not to visit foreign countries, for the sake of exploring and describing them, I need say no more of Nova Scotia than that the climate is very healthy, and that the country is well watered with rivers, lakes, and bays; that the waters are well stocked with fish of the very best kind; and that the forests abound with pine, birch, hemlock, oak, beech, ash, maple, elm, and other trees of equal beauty, if not of equal value. Some say that the eastern portion is rich in minerals: of the truth of this I know nothing, but it is well known that immense quantities of gypsum, or plaster of Paris, as it is called, are shipped every year to the United States for the purpose of fertilizing the land. Coal, also, as well as lumber, makes a considerable item in the list of exports. How good is God to make the productions of one country subservient to the interests of another!

The town of Halifax is pleasantly situated on the declivity of a hill, the summit of which, it is said, is two hundred and forty

feet above the level of the sea. The bay, or harbor, is large enough to contain a fleet of one thousand ships, if need be. On the opposite side of the bay is the thriving village of Dartmouth, which, from the Halifax side, makes a very pretty appearance. The streets of Halifax, thirty years ago, were not very regular, nor very even; neither were the houses very uniform, either in size or in appearance. Probably the place is much improved since. At that time, like all other colonial dependencies, it was well fortified, and strongly guarded by well-disciplined troops. Such a provision may be thought necessary under a monarchical government; but, in my humble opinion, if half the expense of maintaining England's proud navy, and invincible army, were deducted from her annual expenditures, her national debt might soon be extinguished, and the world would be none the worse for the change.

Wednesday, Nov. 4. The captain being detained, in consequence of suffering a passenger to go ashore with goods without paying the duty, several of the passengers

went to the theatre; but the captain not being in a very good humor, would not send his boat to fetch them on board again until morning. This evening a guard of soldiers was sent on board to prevent further trouble.

Thursday, 5. The cabin passengers lodged a complaint against the captain for not providing sufficiently for the voyage, and the steerage passengers sought redress for being detained so long at this port. Many Indians were in town to-day, as well as several of the descendants of the first settlers. At one o'clock His Majesty's frigate, the Fourth, of sixty-two guns, fired a salute, and hoisted the colors of all nations, in honor of the day being the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot. The weather was clear and cold, and the fog, which was very dense on Sunday evening and Monday morning, entirely disappeared.

Friday, 6. We visited the barracks to-day, and conversed with several of the soldiers, who treated us very civilly. They appeared to be content with their lot; but after all that can be said, a miserable life is that of

a soldier. In peace he spends his time in idleness, meditating mischief; in war he wastes his energies in murdering as many of his fellow-creatures, and in destroying as much property, as he can. A strange kind of policy is that of war. Dueling is bad enough, when only one man seeks to destroy the life of another; but when thousands make killing their fellow-creatures their chief employment, it is horrible!* In the course of the afternoon, one of the passengers and I took a walk into the country, called at a house, and got some new milk. It was so delicious that we purchased a bottle and took some on board. On our return we left the main road, and had liked to have been lost in the woods. But we came across a company of Indians. They had kindled two large fires, and were lying round about and between them, apparently as free from care as if

* If this expression sound harshly, let the following *awful facts* be considered: "The war debts of Christian nations amount to the enormous sum of *ten thousand millions* of dollars. It is said that no heathen nations are in debt for war: Christian nations alone make war *on credit!*"

they "had much goods laid up for many years." They begged a few coppers of us, and gave us a fire-brand to light us out of the woods. About eight o'clock we reached the vessel in safety. One of our company had been taken ill of a fever, and for fear of the disorder's spreading, was taken ashore. One of the cabin passengers had lost about two thousand dollars in money. Some of the passengers having left the ship, and taken passage on board another vessel for Boston, a man-of-war's boat, and police officers, were sent after them to search for the lost property, but it could not be found on any of them. At length it was discovered in the possession of the cabin-boy. The gentleman forgave the culprit, although he had made away with twenty or thirty dollars of the money. The poor fellow was so anxious to make others believe that he was rich, or the son of a rich man, that he soon began to squander his ill-gotten wealth. This led to his detection.

Sunday, 9. My companions, Mr. and Mrs. Davidson, not feeling very well, I left them on board, and went to the house of the mis-

sionary, Mr. Dunbar, who, a little before meeting, introduced me to the singers, with whom I formed an agreeable acquaintance. The morning service was well attended. The missionary preached from 2 Cor. v, 20: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ," &c. In the afternoon the good man prevailed on me to preach. I endeavored to expound and apply the words of Christ, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." I was much delighted with the singing, and greatly pleased with the devout attention of the people. After preaching I was introduced to the members of the public band-meeting. They speak much as our people do in love-feast and general class-meetings in this country. Class-meetings, band-meetings, and love-feasts formerly were regarded as "the sinews of Methodism." Wesley used to say, "Where there are no band-meetings there is no Methodism." But times, and persons, and things have changed since then. In the evening Mr. Black delivered an excellent discourse, from Rev. iii, 20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock," &c. After meet-

ing he kindly pressed me to go home with him and tarry all night, which I was very willing to do. We sat up till near midnight. Mr. B. kindly interrogated me respecting my object in going to the States, then asked me how it was with me in regard to funds, and finally invited me to tarry in the province. Such kindness made me forget the perils of the voyage, and feel very much at home.

Monday, 9. Mr. Black entered more particularly into my views and feelings; sent for his son, Mr. Samuel Black, and his son-in-law, Mr. Hamilton, laid my case before them, showed them my letters of recommendation, and wished them to take the matter into consideration. Mr. Hamilton offered to engage me as his clerk for four or five years; but this very kind offer I durst not accept, fearing that I could not endure the rigors of a Nova Scotia winter, being, as I imagined, predisposed to consumption. Mr. Samuel Black offered to employ me six months, with liberty to suit myself if anything else offered. But neither did I feel at liberty to accept of this very generous

proposal, as my mind was drawn towards the United States with an attraction which I could neither explain nor resist. In the afternoon I took tea at Mr. Hamilton's, and in the evening met a party of singers at the house of Mr. Barry, another son-in-law of Mr. Black.

Tuesday, 10. Mr. Bennett, chairman of the district, paid a visit to Halifax to-day. Mr. Black proposed me as a missionary. Mr. Bennett favored the proposition, but I was fearful of that also, and durst not accede to it; and yet I knew no more of the United States, and what might befall me there, than Abraham did of the land of Canaan, and of what would happen to him there, before he left the land of his nativity. In the evening, at the request of Mr. Dunbar, I preached again in the Methodist chapel. After sermon Mr. Bennett prayed for me in a most fervent manner, after which, not feeling clear in my mind to remain in the province, I thanked my friends for their great kindness, and took my farewell of them about ten o'clock, P. M. Mr. Black gave me a letter of introduction to

friends in New-York, and two dollars in money. Mr. D. gave me the same sum in cash, and a bottle of wine to cheer me on the way, if necessary. The money was very acceptable, and the wine was very useful to Mrs. Davidson, who was very feeble in body and rather depressed in spirit. Such signal acts of benevolence I did not expect to meet with anywhere; and, least of all, did I think that I should ever see that land where I met with so many tokens of Christian regard and brotherly love.

After bidding our friends in Halifax farewell, we embarked a second time for New-York, and for eleven dreary days, and as many dismal nights, we were tossed about again on the perilous deep. Sometimes a violent headwind drove us out to sea farther than we wished, then again a fair wind wafted us gently onward toward the desired haven. Cold rains and contrary winds sent us to our berths, from which, if we did not take particular care, we were in danger of being suddenly ejected. On one occasion one of the passengers was thrown with dreadful violence from one side of the ves-

sel to the other, and, falling across a chest, injured his back very much. Another passenger seeing this, and fearing that worse might come, fainted away. One evening, in order to pass away the time, brother Davidson read a few chapters in a very excellent work called "The Retrospect," which quite relieved our anxious minds. The verse at the end of No. 10 seemed quite appropriate:—

"But hush, my soul, nor dare repine,
The time thy God appoints is best;
While here to do his will be mine,
And his to fix the time of rest."

CHAPTER XVI.

NEW-LONDON, AND NEW-YORK.

IT was not long after we had heard these comfortable lines, and taken, perhaps, one more night's rest on the rolling deep, that, as the day began to dawn, our slumbers were broken by a very agreeable sound, which was nothing else but "land in sight." The weather was remarkably clear and cold ; but all our company were in good health, all were cheerful, all were glad, and a few were truly thankful, in view of a speedy termination of the voyage. But our wary captain was not at all inclined to trust himself to take his vessel into port. He, therefore, very prudently engaged a pilot to do that for him. We were then not far from Block Island ; and as our captain was not acquainted with the coast, he trusted that all was right ; and on Saturday afternoon, Nov. 21st, we came to anchor in the harbor opposite the city of New-London. Our old friend, who supposed that in forty

days we should gain the desired haven, thought it rather singular that we who sailed from London in the Old World, should land at London in the New. But so it was ; and pretty soon after we dropped anchor, a custom-house officer was on board. He was a pleasant old gentleman, and, as we afterwards found out, a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The next day being the holy Sabbath, I put on my over-coat and went ashore. The first man I saw on the dock was father Crannell, the good old gentleman who came on board in the capacity of a custom-house officer the evening before. I inquired of him for a place of worship, and he, true to his colors, directed me to the Methodist Church. I had read about the Methodist *Episcopal* Church in America before I left England, and supposed that the term *Episcopal* included all that appertains to the whole Church service as performed in the Church of England, with the exception of prayers for the king and queen, and royal family. I expected to find stone churches, with towers and spires, and bells, and organs, and priests

clad in sacerdotal garments ; and to hear prayers and sermons read, and all done up in true Episcopal style. What else could I expect ? Dr. Coke was a bishop, and Mr. Asbury was a bishop. Mr. Wesley wore his canonicals, and read prayers ; and how did I know but his successors in the ministry did the same ? I soon found out, however, that I had been mistaken. The preacher stationed in New-London was the Rev. Asa Kent, and the one I heard that morning was the Rev. Wm. Bentley, a local elder, from the city of Norwich. Had the former been bishop of New-London, and the latter of Norwich, I should not have complained, provided everything else had been in keeping with the dignity of their station. As it was, I was very well satisfied. Brother Bentley took for his text 1 Kings, x, 6-8, and his discourse was about the glory of Solomon's kingdom, and the greater glory of that of Christ. In the afternoon father Kent preached on Paul's thorn in the flesh : and a most capital sermon it was, fully equal, I think, to one which I heard from the Rev. Mr. Oakes, a little before I left

Derby. In the evening Mr. Bentley preached again. On this occasion he gave a specimen of that kind of controversial preaching for which the Methodists in New-England had long been famous, but which is now getting out of date. It was well for me that the brethren did not ask me to preach, as I might not have had courage to refuse, or wisdom enough to avoid an undertaking where success would have been doubtful, and defeat all but certain. The good pastor, however, kindly offered me a lodging, which I thankfully accepted, as I was not able to get to the ship that night.

The next morning I hastened on board with an invitation to brother and sister Davidson to go ashore. Having suffered no small mortification of feeling the day before, on account of my negligence in regard to dress, &c., I took care to shave, wash, change my clothes, and adjust my whole costume, so as to appear respectable. Brother and sister Davidson did the same; and though there was a marked difference between the fashions of Old and New-England, the people of New-London made no objection to our

dress, but received us cordially, and treated us with all that kindness for which the New-Englanders are so remarkable. We spent the day very pleasantly, in company with Messrs. Kent, Bentley, and others; and in the evening attended prayer-meeting at the church, which was a lively and refreshing time. Brother and sister Davidson stayed all night at Mr. Kent's, and Mr. Bentley kindly took me to the house of Mr. Rogers, the confectioner, where I found myself in the company of some choice singers, with whom I spent an agreeable hour, and then retired to rest, in an elegant upper room, richly furnished. Next morning, before sunrise, father Crannell was looking us up to go and take breakfast with his family. I had taken tea with them the day before under very embarrassing circumstances. But now the young ladies, who looked on me then with a benignant kind of suspicion, treated me and my friends with the most marked attention.

In the evening brother Davidson and I accompanied Messrs. Kent, Bentley, and Stockman, across the river to Groton, a

stony kind of place, remarkable in the history of the United States, for Colonel Ledyard's brave resistance of the British troops, under Arnold, in 1781. Here brother Davidson preached, and I gave an exhortation, after which we returned to the city. While recrossing the river, in an open boat, my attention was particularly arrested by the uncommon brilliancy of the evening star. I certainly thought, and with good reason, that "bright Venus on her azure throne," appeared larger and brighter than in England; which was owing, no doubt, to the clearness of the atmosphere, so different from that of Old London. The next morning, before we were aware, our ship weighed anchor, and sailed for New-York. For a moment or two we felt somewhat alarmed; but the friends kindly bade us be of good cheer, as Captain Howard, "a Methodist brother," would sail on Friday, and we might go with him. We therefore dismissed our fears, and spent another day, very pleasantly, with our friends in New-London, and in the evening attended a meeting for prayer and exhortation at the church.

Thursday, Nov. 26. As this was the day for *General Thanksgiving* throughout the State of Connecticut, at half-past ten, according to custom, we repaired to the church, where Mr. Kent first read the governor's proclamation, and then preached a suitable discourse from Heb. xiii, 15: "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto His name."*

* As the proclamation is a State paper, and a very religious document, I herewith present my readers with a copy,—not the one that I heard that day, but one that I obtained since, viz., that of Governor Cleaveland, for the year 1843:—

"Another revolution of the seasons, crowned with the goodness of a beneficent Providence, has brought us to that period of the year when we are admonished by the examples of a pious ancestry, and our sense of duty, to set apart a day for the public expression of our thankfulness and gratitude, for the never-failing mercies of Him who reigneth in the heavens and controlleth the destiny of man.

"I do therefore recommend that Thursday, the thirtieth day of November next, be observed throughout this State as a day of Christian thanksgiving, praise, and prayer. And I do invite the ministers and teachers of the various religious denominations, with all

Having got through our religious exercises with, perhaps, as much sincerity and devotion as other people, we dined with father Crannell's family; and then, in com-

the people of the State, to assemble on that day at their usual places of divine worship, and there, with hearts filled with love towards God and their fellow-men, unite in the observance of such religious exercises and devotions as become the members of a Christian community. Especially ought we, on that occasion, to offer up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, for the continuance of his guardian care over the welfare of our State and country during the year now drawing to a close : for blessing us with seasons of healthfulness and fertility ; for exempting us from the horrors of war and the ravages of pestilence ; for rewarding the labors of the husbandman with abundant returns of the fruits of the earth ; prospering the mechanical, manufacturing, and commercial interests of our people ; and securing us in the quiet enjoyment of civil and religious freedom.

" We should also praise and adore his holy name for the distinguished blessings secured to us by the government under which, by his favor, we are permitted to live ; for the wonderful improvements that have been made in the arts and sciences ; for the success which has attended the benevolent and charitable enterprises of our people ; for the great moral revolution that has been wrought in society by the glorious progress of the temperance reformation ; and, above

pany with the good old patriarch, the preacher-in-charge, and his family, we all took tea, or, more properly, a late dinner, in true thanksgiving style, according to the form and fashion of "the land of steady habits," at the house of our friend Rogers, the confectioner. The profusion of good things spread out before us, on this occasion, gave us reason to think that the people of New-England had judged rightly in appointing a day for the special purpose of giving thanks unto the name of the Lord. I have taken many a thanksgiving dinner since,

all, for providing us with the means of redemption, sanctification, and salvation, through the mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord.

"At the same time let prayers be offered for the continuance of the divine blessing upon our beloved country and its cherished institutions: that God in his mercy will hereafter vouchsafe to us the blessings of health, peace, concord, and plenty; that he will enlighten those who are intrusted with the administration of public affairs with his infinite wisdom, and guide and direct them in the performance of every official duty; that all efforts for extending the blessings of liberty, advancing the cause of religion and morality, and meliorating the condition of the human race, may be prospered, and the inalienable rights of man be speedily recognized throughout the world."

but do not now remember to have seen a table better supplied, or a finer specimen of Christian conviviality, than on that day. In the evening I attended meeting with father Crannel, at a private house, where, after giving a short discourse on Jeremiah xxxii, 38, 39, we had a lively prayer-meeting, and the first specimen of transatlantic shouting that I ever heard. How it is that the good people of Old England have left off this practice, and the New-Englanders have taken it up, I shall not now stop to inquire. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." A good, hearty, "Amen," in the time of prayer, or a sensible shout of praise, in time of sermon, is very animating; it has the sanction of Scripture, and therefore it must be right.

The time having arrived for us to leave New-London, we took passage for New-York with Captain Howard. He sent for us before breakfast, and with sailor-like generosity made us welcome to the best his sloop afforded. We left the port of New-London about eight o'clock, with a fair wind and pleasant company, thankful to God and the

friends for the kindness we had experienced while there.

The city of New-London was so named by an act which passed the Assembly in 1658. Part of this ancient document is in the following words, to wit: "Whereas it hath been the commendable practice of the inhabitants of all these colonies, that as this country hath its denomination from our dear native country, and thence is called New-England, so the planters in their first settling of new plantations have given to them the names of Boston, Hartford, Windsor, &c., this court, considering, that there hath yet no place in any of the colonies been named in memory of the city of London, that therefore they might leave to posterity the memory of that renowned city from whence we had our transportation, have thought fit, in honor to that famous city, to call the said plantation *New-London*." The name of the river was also called Thames, after the name of the river that runs through the city of London. The English colonists did not then foresee that *New-Amsterdam*, in less than two centuries,

would become the largest city in the New World, and in less than two centuries more would probably rival London itself, or they would, most likely, have called the Connecticut seaport by some other name, and have given its present appellation to New-York. Be that as it may, New-London is a pleasant place.

The harbor is the best in the State, having five fathoms water, and is both spacious and safe, and accessible at all seasons of the year, and at all times of the tide. The city is built on a gentle declivity, on the west bank of the river Thames, fourteen miles south of Norwich. It contains five or six places of worship, three banks, two insurance offices, and two or three newspaper establishments. The inhabitants own considerable shipping, employed in the coasting trade, the trade with the West Indies, and the whale and seal fisheries. In 1834 upward of thirty ships, and nine hundred men and boys, were employed in this last-mentioned branch of business.

The Methodist church which, in 1818, had just been finished, is literally built on

a rock, will seat, perhaps, eight hundred persons, and is a very commodious place of worship. The pulpit, in size and shape, was something new to me, being much lower, larger, and more convenient than our pulpits in England. It is, if I remember right, of a semi-circular form, and will hold, if need be, six or seven preachers. The chief singers, at that time, sat facing the pulpit. They did not monopolize the singing, but led that part of divine worship in a Christian-like manner. The tunes, and their style of singing, were such as had long prevailed in New-England, but the singing was much better than such as I have heard since in some places. The men with deep-toned voices sang the bass, "sonorous and clear;" those with tenor voices sang the air, in which also many women joined; and those women who had been properly trained, sang what was then called the treble, in such tunes as Wells, Windham, Coronation, and Exhortation, common metre and long metre. The practice of letting pews was not then as common as it is now, but after every sermon the trustees

took up a collection, called “The Penny Collection,” for the purpose of defraying the expense of warming and lighting the house, and keeping it in order.

About two years before we were there a great revival of religion had taken place in New-London among the Methodists, at which time the number of converts was very considerable. My first impressions of the preacher-in-charge (Rev. Asa Kent) were, that for preaching abilities, genuine and deep piety, uprightness of character, consistency of conduct, and agreeableness of manners, he stood deservedly high among his people; and his kindness and care over the strangers, while we were there, will never be forgotten as long as his name is familiar to our eyes and ears.

There have been many defections in New-England since that period, as well among the Methodists as in “the standing order.” “Nevertheless, the heart of Asa,” I believe, “has been perfect all his days.” 1 Kings xv, 14. He is a Methodist of the right stamp, and a genuine Christian. The kindness of father Crannell, Messrs. Stock-

man and Rogers, and all others, whose hospitality we shared, will always be remembered as a pleasing incident, inseparable from the name of New-London.

IN two days after we left the hospitable shores of New-England we saw the towers and spires of the great and growing city of NEW-YORK, which, on account of its size, situation, population, and extensive commerce, is properly called the *London of America*, and, as I have said before, should have been so named. In 1818 the population was not quite 200,000. Now, I suppose, it is not far from 500,000. The number of Methodist churches at that time was ten, of which only one is now standing, the others having been rebuilt, and twelve more added since. When I and my friends, J. and L. Davidson, landed in this city, which was on Saturday afternoon, November 29th, we were conducted, by Captain Howard, to the residence of the book agent, the Rev. Joshua Soule, who, on hearing our names, and from what country we came, responded, "Well, brethren, I am glad to

see you as strangers and foreigners. I am glad to see you as Englishmen. I am glad to see you as Methodists, but more particularly as Methodist preachers,"—all which, in connection with the bland and dignified manner in which it was uttered, made a deep and lasting impression on our minds. Such language was worthy of the man who has now, for many years, filled the high and responsible office of a Christian bishop.

The next day was the holy Sabbath, and it was our privilege to worship on the spot, though not in the same building, where the first Methodist chapel in the New World was built. We were glad to join in the same modes of worship, and to hear the same doctrines preached as in England. The first preacher that we heard was the Rev. Laban Clark, the second, Seth Crowell, and the third, Fitch Reed. I dare say the sermons were good, but, alas! for me, I was so much taken up with other thoughts, that I soon forgot both text and sermon, and, in this instance, I ought to set myself down as a "forgetful hearer of the word."

In the course of the following week we formed an agreeable acquaintance with most of the preachers stationed in the city, and also with several other friends and families, some natives of this country, and some of that from which we came. A few of them are still pilgrims on earth, but the greater part have gone to their long home. Their names are still dear to us, and the memory of their kindness is too deeply engraven on our hearts ever to be effaced. The words of our Lord, "I was a stranger and ye took me in," seldom occur to my mind without bringing with them the tenderest recollection of the scenes of *Eighteen Hundred and Eighteen*, and of the cordial reception, the generous greetings, and kind entertainment we met with in Nova Scotia, New-London and New-York.

On presenting my letters of recommendation to the proper authorities in the Methodist Episcopal Church, I was advised not to go into any secular business, but to give myself up to the work of the ministry; and as there was a temporary vacancy on Jamaica circuit, Long Island, I was recom-

mended to the presiding elder, the Rev. Samuel Merwin, as a suitable person to fill that place. This was new work to me; and as everything connected with it was new and interesting, if I ever shall have occasion to resume my narrative, I will tell the reader what were my *first impressions* of that part of this great and growing country where it has been my lot to travel.

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